

Student Fee Request for Information

FY 2023-2024

Prepared by:

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Office of Academic Achievement

Overview of the Unit:

Mission: The Office of Academic Achievement (OAA) is home to programs and services that promote academic excellence. Our programs help students thrive in college, persist in their studies, and graduate on time.

In the Office of Academic Achievement, we:

- 1) Create pathways to CU Denver and aid students as they transition through their college career.
- 2) Help students develop knowledge and skills needed for success in college.
- 3) Provide enhanced, high-impact curricular and co-curricular learning experiences.
- 4) Ensure that students stay on track for degree completion.

We achieve our mission by adhering to our collective values to:

- 1) Collaborate to create integrated learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom and empower students.
- 2) Innovate by better understanding the lived experiences of our students.
- 3) Create experiences that are accessible to all and continually identify under-served groups to provide improved support that reduces educational inequities.

Services: The Office of Academic Achievement provides robust support that helps students at the University of Colorado Denver achieve their academic goals. OAA includes the following areas:

University Advising: University Advising coordinates advising practices across campus and provides advising support to targeted student populations. The Center for Undergraduate Exploration & Advising (CUE&A) is a resource for students who are looking to explore major and career pathways at CU Denver. We welcome students who are still deciding on a major, planning to change their major, and/or looking to supplement their current major with a minor or certificate program. We also serve as primary academic advisors to undeclared students in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS), First Year College of Arts & Media (CAM) students, and undergraduate Non-Degree seeking students.

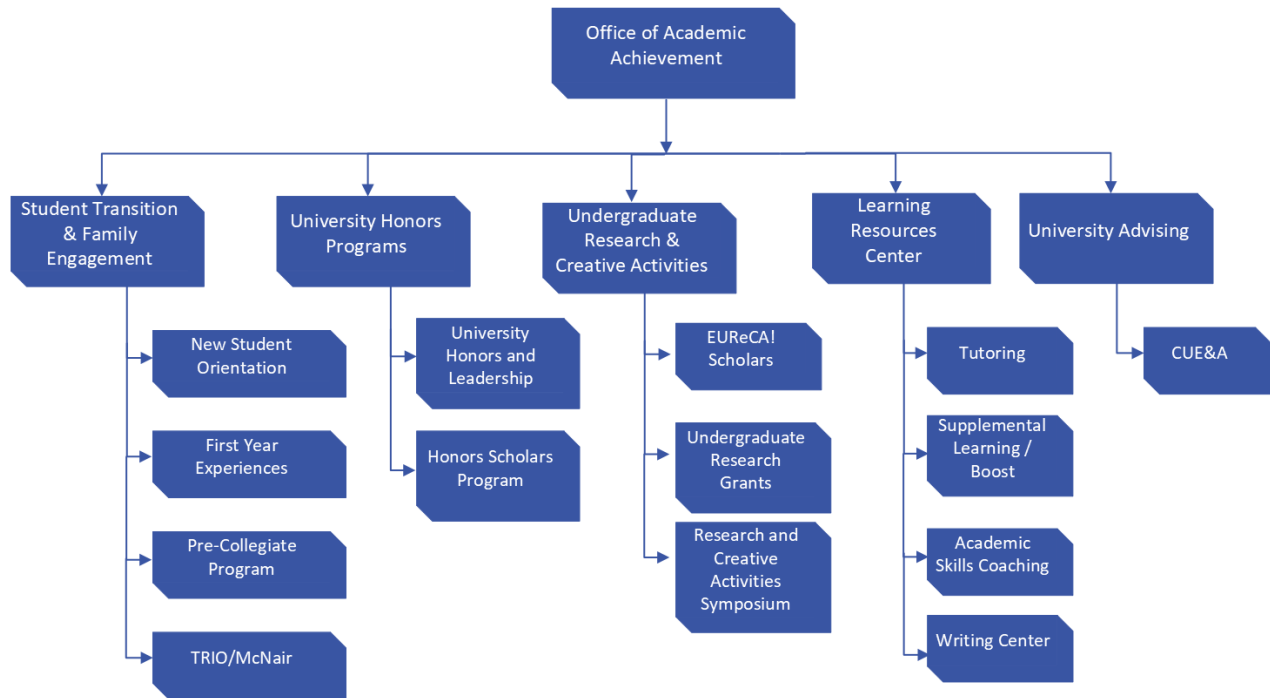
Learning Resources Center (LRC): Provides support for student learning in courses through tutoring, supplemental instruction, and intensive preparation for historically challenging courses like General Chemistry, General Biology, and Anatomy. In the summer of 2024, services provided by the LRC grew when the Writing Center was reorganized under the umbrella of the LRC. Workshops in study skills also help students learn how to be better learners and individual coaching sessions provide personalized advice that helps students maximize their learning potential. In addition to their local campus-based services the LRC also provides 24/7 access to contracted tutoring services through TutorMe. LRC staff also provide specialized academic support for immigrant, international, and English language learners.

Student Transitions & Family Engagement (STFE): Supports the student journey to and through CU Denver. STFE consists of four distinct programs: Pre-Collegiate, TRIO/McNair, New Student Orientation, and First Year Experiences. The Pre-Collegiate Program enhances the academic preparedness of promising middle school and high school students, many of whom eventually enroll at CU Denver as First-Generation college students. These students participate in our Summer Bridge Program (Lynx Summer Academy) giving First Gen students the opportunity to develop skills to be successful college students, interact with peers, earn credits, and connect with resources. New Student Orientation welcomes all new students to campus assuring that they are enrolled and connected to campus resources. Once new students are on campus our First Year Experience (FYE) courses help them to acclimate to the rigors of college life and connect with other students. All FYE students have access to a peer mentor through the Peer Advocate Leader (PAL) program. Our TRIO/McNair Program supports First Gen, low-income students and students with disabilities through holistic wrap-around services and scholarships. STFE also supports students' families through the production of a monthly newsletter, maintaining a Facebook page, and events like Family Day.

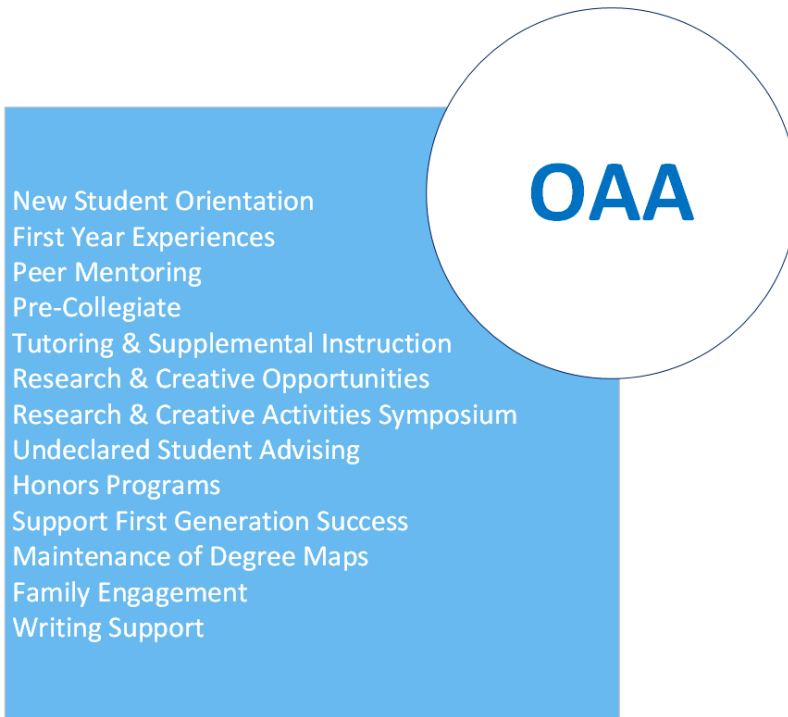
Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities (URCA): The Office of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities (URCA) connects CU Denver students to mentored learning experiences in research and creative disciplines. Whether students are just starting off in their research and creative explorations or are already driving their own projects, URCA is there to offer support and guidance to CU Denver undergrads and their mentors. We provide funding for student research jobs, fellowships, and grants; host workshops and community discussions; provide 1:1 undergraduate research advising and host the annual Research and Creative Activities Symposium (RaCAS).

University Honors Programs (UHL): University Honors offers two tracks that students can use to earn university honors. Our long running University Honors and Leadership program welcomes 40 incoming first-year students each year who participate in an intensive, cohort-based program with dedicated courses. Transfer students are now integrated into this program as well. Finally, our new Honors Scholars Program allows a more flexible path. Qualified students can apply to the program, negotiate honors contracts for classes they are taking, and participate in enhanced experiential learning opportunities.

Organizational Chart - Areas Within OAA



Student Services Provided by OAA



Data for OAA:

In the 2023-2024 Academic Year areas in Academic Achievement served:

- 3998 unique undergraduate students (**41% of all undergraduates, N=9711**)
- 332 unique graduate students (8% of all graduate students)
- 130 unique Anschutz campus students

Of the 3998 unique undergraduate students we served:

- 1906 (48%) were First Generation college students

Of the 4474 total unique students we served:

- 2959 (66%) submitted financial aid applications
- Of those students who submitted financial aid application 1492 (50.42%) were Pell Eligible

Historically, OAA has primarily served undergraduate students with a strong emphasis on first year programs. In the 2023-2024 academic year we served 3998 unique undergraduate students at the following class levels:

Undergraduate Class Level	Count Unique Individuals Served by OAA	Count Total Class Level on Campus	Percent of Total Students in Class Level on Campus Served by OAA
Freshman	1606	2281	70%
Sophomore	841	1988	42%
Junior	679	2249	30%
Senior/5 th yr. Senior	397	3068	13%
Post-Bachelor Undergraduate	9	74	12%
Unclassified	466	NA	NA
Grand Total	3998	9711	41%

Undergraduate Race/Ethnicity	Count of Unique Individuals Served by OAA	Percent Served by OAA	Count Total Students on Campus	Percent Students on Campus	Percent of Group Served by OAA
BLACK	278	7%	881	8%	32%
ASIAN	404	10%	1379	14%	29%
HISPA	1197	50%	2867	30%	42%
International	154	4%	474	5%	32%
AMERIND	19	.4%	137	1%	14%
PACIF	5	.1%	66	1%	8%
UNKNOWN	37	.9%	119	1%	31%
NULL	301	7%	NA		NA
WHITE	1362	34%	3788	39%	36%
TWOPLUS	241	6%	NA		NA
Grand Total	3998		9711		41%

Accomplishments:

Research and Creative Activities Symposium Growth:

In 2024, 212 students presented at the 26th annual Research and Creative Activities Symposium (RaCAS), up from 185 in 2023. The event was hosted as a hybrid in-person event, allowing students and attendees to participate from across the country. Eight hundred people attended the in-person event, and the RaCAS Virtual Project Showcase received over 2,000 unique site visits. This year's event also benefitted from partnerships with the CU President's Sustainable Solutions Challenge, which awarded \$2,000 in cash prizes to six RaCAS presenters, and the Office of Research Services' Research Grand Challenge Teams.

Making Research More Accessible:

A goal of the EURēCA! Program which runs out of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities, is to remove financial barriers to participation in undergraduate RCA and level the playing field for socioeconomic groups historically underrepresented in these activities. By removing the expectation of "free" labor, students are afforded access to high-impact research and creative experiences proven to positively influence learning gains, student retention, scholarly identity, and career trajectory. In AY 2023-2024, 138 URCA-funded undergraduate researchers earned over \$253,554 through work-study positions, research grants, and summer fellowships. Approximately 52% of these URCA-funded students were eligible for the Pell Grant and 42% were first generation students.

Advising and Support for Registration Days:

In AY 2023-2024 University Advising, CUE&A, and New Student Orientation worked to redesign "Registration Day" events for incoming first year students. Registration Days are 3-hour remote events that occur between April and August and are a venue through which new students gain access to UCD Access, email, degree maps, student success tools, receive advising and register for classes. In the past the advising component of these events was staffed by advisors from the academic units across campus which have been extremely understaffed in recent years. The Registration Day redesign used trained Registration Advisors to use degree maps to guide students in course selection. Changes in Registration Day have resulted in greater choice for students who can choose to attend any Registration Day and have reduced wait times from 91.3 days between declaring intent to attending a Registration Day to 71 days between intent and registration.

Expanding the Honors Program:

In the Fall of 2022, we introduced our Honors Scholars Certificate program which allows any student who qualifies to participate in rigorous honors coursework through honors contracts with faculty and participation in enhanced experiential learning. In 2024 we have 230 students in the Honors Scholars Program!

Family Day Events:

Over the past two years we have been working to reestablish family engagement and support programs. 231 family members attended our Family Day events in 2023, compared to 182 in 2022 (27% increase in participation). Orientation Leaders (a team of 12 OLs), each had over 144 Virtual Contact hours with new students; and 32 in person contact hours with students and guests.

Pre-Collegiate Development:

In AY 2023-2024, 746 students from area middle schools and high schools participated in the Pre-Collegiate Development Program run by CU Denver. These students receive support, mentoring, and development to assure that they can achieve their dreams of attending college. Students attend monthly workshops on topics like “applying for college” and “understanding financial aid” and participate in college fairs. Last year, 90% of high school seniors from the pre-collegiate program ended up attending college, and 32% of pre-collegiate students came to CU Denver.

TRIO/McNair:

TRIO Programs received a \$10,000 DEI Inclusive Excellence Grant to assist in engagement and knowledge of first-gen and DEI initiatives. These funds have been used to create workshops related to DEI topics. The TRIO/McNair office serves an average of 173 students per semester. The efficacy of the program is evidenced by the fact that 93% of the students in the program persist in the program and stay enrolled in school. Seventy-four percent of TRIO/McNair students graduate in six years, well above the university average.

First Year Experience:

780 students enrolled in an FYE course in the Fall of 2023. This represents 45% of incoming first year students. The Peer Advocate Leader Program (PALs), which provides peer mentorship for incoming students who enroll in FYE, continued to advocate for the professional development of the students serving as peer mentors. Ten PALs earned Level One certifications, 9 students earned Level Two certifications, and 12 students earned Level Three certifications from the College Reading & Learning Association. To achieve this, PALs invested over 800 hours of time mentoring other students.

Learner Support:

The Learning Resources Center (LRC) supported over 900 students with close to 6000 contact hours of service provided. This year our peer tutors conducted 899 peer tutoring sessions.

Underserved Students:

First-Generation College and Historically Underserved Students:

Pre-Collegiate Program: This program works with promising students who are in Denver area middle schools and high schools to help them become “college ready.” Designed to serve students who would be the first in their families to attend college, the program serves many students from historically underrepresented groups. In 2023 there were a total of 746 CU Denver Pre-Collegiate participants enrolled, including students from the following populations:

- Latinx/Hispanic: 74% (n=551)
- Black/African American: 8% (n=61)
- Asian American: 5% (n=36)
- Native American: <1% (n=3)
- White/Other: 10% (n=78)
- More Than One Race: 2% (n=17)

Lynx Summer Academy (FYE): This summer bridge program serves first-generation students, many of whom are from historically underserved populations. Students in LSA earn college credits and learn techniques that help them to be successful in college. The 2023 LSA cohort consisted of students in the following groups:

- First-Generation College students (41 total)
 - 100%
- Race/Ethnicity breakdown (41 students total)
 - Latinx/Hispanic: 15% (n=6)
 - Black/African American: 7% (n=3)
 - Asian American: 5% (n=2)
 - Native American: 0
 - White/Other 10% (n=4)
 - Bi-Racial: 59% (n=24)

International Students:

New Student Orientation: New Student Orientation has increased offerings for new international students. Prior to 2020, international students were not included in our general new student sessions. Now, both undergraduate and graduate international students are invited to participate in all aspects of orientation programming, allowing them earlier access to advisors and registration support. During the 2023 – 2024 Academic Year we welcomed approximately 111 new international students to New Student Orientation.

Immigrant Students/English Language Learners:

Learning Resources Center: The LRC offers support to international students and English language learners by providing tutoring and learning support in multiple languages. Students interested in receiving this support simply submit a request for support and the LRC works to identify a tutor who can help. In addition, many of the student workers at the LRC speak Spanish and one full time staff member is fluent in Spanish.

Low-Income Students:

Paid Opportunities for Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities: Research shows that students who participate in high impact educational practices are more likely to succeed, retain, and graduate. Participation in HIPs has been shown to provide even greater cumulative and accentuating benefits to students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students. Low-income students are often unable to participate in enriched high-impact learning experiences because they need to maintain employment in jobs off campus. Our EURECA! work-

study program provides students with opportunities to participate in research or creative activities while earning a paycheck. In AY 2023 – 2024, there were 138 unique students funded through EURECA! Programs. 72 students (52%) of those were Pell Grant eligible. In 2018 (the year before we instituted the EURECA! Work Study program), only 41% of participants in undergraduate research were Pell Grant eligible suggesting the program is helping to support more low-income students in having these academically enriching opportunities.

Measuring Impact:

The Office of Academic Achievement (OAA) is working to build a culture of assessment in which program evaluation and data are used to inform strategic decisions and improve programming. We listen to the voices of students through satisfaction surveys and focus groups as well as open and honest conversations with our constituencies. We move beyond satisfaction to assess the efficacy of our work by examining key metrics like pass rates in gateway courses and persistence of first-year students.

Student Satisfaction - New Student Orientation:

First-Year student responses, when asked to rate the sessions below:

	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Poor	Very Poor
CU Denver Portal Set Up	59%	37%	4%	1%	0%
Navigating Your First Semester	51%	40%	9%	0%	0%
1:1 Registration Specialist Meeting	69%	27%	3%	0%	0%
Just Ask Me Session	52%	36%	10%	1%	1%
Course Registration with Orientation Leader	62%	33%	4%	0%	0%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
I have a better understanding of my degree requirements.	62%	37%	1%
I know how to find my degree audit.	76%	24%	0%

- 94% of first-time students attending NSO reported they were enrolled in 12+ credits
- 97% reported they were able to access their CU Denver email
- 99% reviewed their degree audit
- 98% reported that they were confident in the courses in which they registered

Transfer student responses, when asked to rate the statements below:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I know how to contact my academic advisor	41%	53%	4%	2%

I have a better understanding of my degree requirements	42%	46%	9%	2%
I successfully enrolled in courses	33%	60%	5%	3%
I am satisfied with my classes that transferred to CU Denver	52%	41%	5%	2%
I know how to find my degree audit	53%	41%	4%	1%
I know how to access university systems: UCDAccess/University Email/Canvas	33%	55%	9%	3%
I can identify one resource if I have questions. Write which one below:	60%	37%	1%	2%

Satisfaction and Efficacy of TRIO Programs:

TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) completed two Student Satisfaction Surveys during the academic year 2023-2024, one in Fall 2023 and one in Spring 2024. TRIO also completes workshop evaluations each semester. The Student Satisfaction Surveys include questions listed below:

5. If you received tutoring from a TRIO SSS peer mentor, was it helpful?
 - a. 17 responses said yes and 3 no for fall 2023
 - b. 11 responses said yes and 1 no for spring 2024.
6. What was your experience like this semester?
 - a. 19 students had a positive experience, 4 neither positive nor negative and 3 a negative experience for fall 2023.
 - b. 17 students said they had a positive experience, with 1 negative and 2 neither positive or negative for spring 2024.
7. If not, what challenges did you face?
 - a. Responses for this question both semesters included faculty issues, personal, big transition, financial, learning and motivation, remote classes and academics.
8. What were the greatest benefits you have received from services provided by the program?
 - a. The responses to this question were very positive, the staff and peer mentors received great feedback for a caring attitude, being able to talk to someone and get advice, getting questions answered and fast.
9. What services, workshops, or resources could we provide that would be more beneficial to you?
 - a. Stress management, personal budget, FAFSA workshops, and support with creating a positive environment.

Lynx Summer Academy

During the first week of the program, students were asked to complete a Pre-survey of 11 Likert scale and 2 open-ended questions related to their perception of college and college success. From 40 respondents in the Pre-survey, 60% of students indicated that they somewhat agree with the statement, "I am prepared for my first day of college." Similar Likert statements in the survey included, "If I need it, I know how to seek academic help at my college (tutoring, study group, office hours, etc.), I am confident in my ability to find a job (on campus/off campus), and I am confident in my ability to pay for college (through work study, loans, scholarships, grants etc.)."

At the end of week four, students were asked to complete the post-survey of 11 Likert scale questions in the same format as the pre-survey, and four open-ended questions. There were 38 respondents in the post-survey. By comparing data from the pre-survey to the post-survey, most questions shifted in the Likert scale. **In the pre-survey, 50% of respondents selected they strongly agree and somewhat agree to the statement, "I know what I need to do to be successful in college," while a total of 97.4% selected they strongly agree and somewhat agree in the post-survey, a 47.4% increase.**

There were other questions that shifted from pre- and post-survey, initially 67.5% strongly agreeing or somewhat agreeing, "I am confident that a campus staff member is looking out for my well-being," compared to 71% strongly or somewhat agreeing in the post-survey. Additionally, 77.5% strongly and somewhat agreed with "I know how to self-advocate to get my needs met on campus," in the pre-survey while 92.1% strongly and somewhat agreed in the post-survey.

The only Likert scale question that experienced a percentage decrease from pre- to post-survey in a statement response was, "I know how to manage my time effectively," with 40% somewhat agreeing in the pre-survey, and 39% somewhat agreeing in the post-survey. However, the number of students that indicated strongly agree shifted in the post-survey, with 13 students (34.2%) selecting this answer compared to only 9 (22.5%) in the pre-survey, an increase of 11.7%.

In the open-ended questions answered by respondents, lessons learned and things to consider for next year's program were gathered. **Respondents were asked in the post-survey to indicate, "What do you wish Lynx Summer Academy would have included?" with responses such as:**

- "I would like LSA to add more guest speakers."
- "I wish it included stress management tips and mental health awareness."

Additionally, respondents were asked, "What did you enjoy most about Lynx Summer Academy?" and answers received included:

- "I enjoyed learning new things about the university and what they have to offer for students."
- "I definitely enjoyed talking with the professors as they all were willing to provide support when I needed such."

Overall, based on survey responses, the students enrolled in the LSA 2024 cohort expressed signs of significant growth, change, and supportive experiences in the five-week program.

Satisfaction and Efficacy of Advising:

We send a student feedback survey to any student who meets with an advisor. In the data from June 30th, 2023 to October 4, 2024, 98% of students thought their advising experience was useful or very useful, 86% of students found the experience “very useful”. 100% of students found their advisor to be welcoming and respectful. Below are just some of the many comments from students:

- *[My advisor] was very professional, and helped me with all of my concerns. He knew exactly what I needed to hear and it was a very helpful session for me.*
- *[My advisor] was very patient with me even though I struggled to explain what I wanted or was trying to do. She was very knowledgeable and introduced different resources to me and even repeated herself if I had any questions or issues that she responded to before.*
- *Felt heard, understood, helped with what I needed (special permission for scriptwriting class which is restricted to film/tv majors)*
- *He does a great job helping me feel prepared for classes as well as being welcoming and approachable, [he] has been one of my favorite advisors I've had in schooling.*
- *She broke down every single question I had and helped me discover new possible majors.*

Serving Undergraduate Students

The Office of Academic Achievement was previously known as the Office of Undergraduate Experiences. Although our name changed in 2019, our focus on undergraduate education has not. OAA services primarily serve CU Denver Undergraduates. During the 2023-2024 academic year OAA served 3998 unique undergraduates representing 41% of all undergraduates on campus. With the addition of the Writing Center this year we have absorbed their responsibilities for supporting graduate students as well in some specialized capacities. The Writing Center serves undergraduate and graduate students on the downtown campus as well as Anchutz students for which we receive separate funding.

Future Goals and Strategic Plan Connections

The work of OAA is to ensure the success of all students. At its core, this is work focused on equity. We are proud that last year we expanded access to our honors program, opportunities for undergraduate research and creative activities, first-year experiences, tutoring, and summer bridge programs. Yet, we know that there is still much work to be done to attain the goal of truly becoming an equity serving institution. Below are some of the plans to advance this effort.

Disaggregated Data to Understand Students Served:

To be more inclusive and equitable it is necessary to understand exactly who we are, and are not, currently serving. While we regularly use disaggregated data to better understand our programs and services that are specifically designed to provide support to underserved students, we do not systematically disaggregate our data to analyze all our programs. We continue to work on standardizing our reporting for all programs so that data is disaggregated by race/ethnicity, first-gen status, and Pell grant eligibility (proxy for income). We believe that using and reporting on this data will allow us to identify equity gaps in all the work that we do. (Strategic Goal #1)

Making Programs Sustainable

Over the last ten years programs within OAA have grown and diversified. While this has been positive, it also has occurred with one-time or temporary funds. In this era of shrinking budget and fewer students we need to step back and assess our programs and make strategic decisions about them.

Shared Advising Practices:

At CU Denver each school and college has its own, independently run advising unit. In OAA our Office of University Advising seeks to create venues for information and the creation of shared practices across campus. The efforts of this office are undertaken to help ensure that all students have good experiences with advising. Over the next year the Director of University Advising will be working with all of the units to define and agree upon core advising practices and standards.

Improving Writing Center Services for Students

In the summer of 2024, the English Department in CLAS requested that the Writing Center be moved into OAA and the Learning Resources Center so that it could be managed centrally. This transition has occurred and over the next year we are working to integrate this area within OAA and improve services. In the past several years the Writing Center has closed during key periods of the academic year. This will no longer happen, and the WC will remain open and ready to serve students throughout the school year.