

STATE OF COLORADO



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Colorado Commission on Higher Education

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Colorado Department of Higher Education Announces Grants To Four Institutions To Increase Degree Completion

*University of Colorado at Boulder, Adams State College, Metropolitan State College of Denver,
and University of Northern Colorado To Launch Pilot Programs for Adult and Hispanic
Students*

DENVER – March 2, 2009 – The Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) announced today a total of \$100,000 in grants to four state colleges and universities as part of its efforts to get more Coloradoans to and through college.

Three of the grants (\$25,000 each) – to the University of Colorado at Boulder, Adams State College, and Metropolitan State College of Denver – will help re-enroll adults who have left school for one reason or another even though they have earned nearly enough credits to graduate. The state has identified more than 20,000 students who have accumulated 75 percent of required credits and had GPAs of 2.0 or higher but for various reasons never finished college. The colleges and universities will use the grants to better understand why students have left their campuses and to expand or better communicate the availability of academic and social supports to help these adult students come back to school and graduate.

The other \$25,000 grant – to the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) – will help launch a pilot program to recruit Hispanic students to the Greeley campus and support the university's efforts to assist them in earning degrees in science, technology, and mathematics fields.

DHE is awarding the grants as part of a statewide effort to increase the percentage of adults with a college degree in the state to 55 percent by 2025. Research by the Colorado-based National Center for Higher Education Management Systems indicates that to continue to attract good jobs and compete with the highest achieving states and nations, by 2025 Colorado must produce nearly a quarter million additional degrees beyond those already projected.

Colorado is currently participating in two national initiatives that are providing support for this effort and the funds for the grants: Non-traditional No More (NTNM), a project designed to boost college completion among adults with some college credits but no degree, led by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education; and Making Opportunity Affordable, a Lumina Foundation for Education initiative to promote policies for using dollars invested by students, parents and taxpayers to graduate more students from the nation's public colleges and universities.

“The governor has made it clear—we need to make college degrees a reality for more Coloradans,” said David E. Skaggs, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. “Our colleges and universities are ready to take on the challenge, and these grants are one part of a larger effort to ensure that a larger percentage of Coloradans enter and complete college.”

Following are brief specific descriptions of the four programs the state will fund.

University of Colorado at Boulder through its **Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies** will launch the *CU Complete* program to help Colorado adults return to college and complete their degrees. *CU Complete* will mount a communications campaign to reach former students who left the institution without completing degrees, and provide a “concierge” service that will help adults assess their current needs and interests; provide academic, career, and financial aid advising; and provide assistance and referrals for re-enrolling at any college or university in the state.

Adams State College will launch a degree completion program and conduct a statewide survey to determine why students do not complete their degree programs. In the degree completion program, the college will use data gathered through NTNMT to identify prospective “ready adult” students and offer them a personal consultation to determine how much additional coursework is needed to earn a degree. The program will re-enroll as many adult ready students as possible in on-campus and distance degree programs, developing degree plans tailored to the needs of each student. The college will also use NTNMT data to identify students statewide who have left college without completing a degree and conduct a telephone survey of 400 of these students to learn the reasons these students left college and the barriers they perceived to earning a degree.

Metropolitan State College of Denver will launch a recruitment campaign targeting “ready adults” who attended Metro State but did not complete a degree. Through advertising and direct mailings, the college will invite the former students to return and complete their degrees through its Individualized Degree Program. The college will work with students who respond to the outreach, assessing their academic and financial needs and developing a degree plan for graduation. Additionally, Metro State will ensure students have access to on-campus daycare, an emergency fund for items not otherwise covered, academic support including tutoring, counseling and peer support groups, and career services and internship opportunities.

University of Northern Colorado will pursue efforts to increase the number of Hispanic students entering the freshman class and to enhance academic and student support for Hispanic students interested in science, technology, and mathematics programs. The university will expand its outreach efforts by hosting recruiting events at fifteen high schools along the Front Range with the largest numbers of Hispanic students, and through direct outreach to prospective students by Hispanic students currently enrolled at UNC, providing information about academics, support services and college life. UNC will boost its academic and student support by establishing a learning community of Hispanic undergraduate students with an interest in science- and math-related majors, in which students will take common courses and participate in activities designed to increase their chances of staying in college and getting a degree. The

university will also expand its tutoring program, with a special emphasis on recruiting junior- and senior-level Hispanic students enrolled in science, technology, and mathematics programs.

For more information on these programs, visit <http://higher.ed.colorado.gov>

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