

Student population grows in Colorado

The number of students at public colleges and universities in Colorado increased overall by nearly 5 percent between fall 2001 and fall 2005, according to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education's recent *Report on Student Enrollment*. The report also found the most significant gains at four-year institutions, while two-year campuses actually saw declines between 2003 and 2005.

"Should trends continue, institutions at the four-year level would need to find ways to accommodate growing demand while maintaining high-quality instruction and student services," the report explains. "Two-year colleges, on the other hand, would have to identify the causes and consequences of declining enrollments and identify ways to successfully serve increasingly diverse – and predominantly female – student populations."

The study also points to a steady increase in the percentage of minority students, which outpaced the overall growth rate at both four-year and two-year colleges. Women continued to dominate enrollment (the gender gap widened throughout the state), while the proportion of traditional-age resident students declined. Details include:

- At four-year colleges and universities, total undergraduate enrollment grew 9.2 percent.
- At two-year institutions, total enrollment increased by 8 percent between 2001 and 2003, but by fall 2005 had dropped to its lowest level in five years.
- Minority student enrollment grew by nearly 13 percent. The largest minority enrollment in fall 2005 was at Metropolitan State College of Denver and Community College of Denver. The largest proportions of minority students were at the community colleges in Denver and Aurora.
- The gender gap is widest at two-year colleges, where approximately 60 percent of students are women. At four-year schools, women make up approximately 52.5 percent of enrollments.

- Minority enrollment in graduate/first professional programs, however, is far lower than for the undergraduate level, at only 11.9 percent in fall 2005.
- In fall 2001, 45.4 percent of all students enrolled in public colleges were male. By 2005, that percentage declined to 44.4 percent.

The Commission's full report can be found online at www.state.co.us/cche/news.html.

It's always peak season for Thomas Rockwood



*Thomas Rockwood,
Client Relations*

Climbing Mt. Rainier once in a lifetime is quite an achievement. But climbing it *once a week*? Is that even possible?

Meet Thomas Rockwood, the newest member of our Client Relations team. A committed outdoor enthusiast, Thomas spent many of his college days working the base, the slopes, and yes – the peaks – of Mt. Rainier as a climbing guide. Some

months he actually led climbers up the mountain as often as every week.

These days, Thomas spends much of his time not, as you might expect, on Colorado's many mountains, but on its college campuses. Thomas fills his days doing what he can to help financial aid professionals help their students. He was once a financial aid officer himself (and an admissions officer) at Johnson Wales University in Denver, so he

knows the territory and the challenges. Thomas also brings to his work the experience he gained as a trainer for consolidation and loan servicing staff at Nelnet. He moved from that position to his current role last July.

“I’m thrilled to be working directly with the school folks who really make financial aid happen. Whatever I can do to find value or bring value to our customers is what I try to focus on,” says Thomas. “My goal is to figure out how I can lend my support and tailor our resources to fit each school’s needs.”

And in his spare time, Thomas admits he does look upward to the 14,000+ peaks around the state, contemplating the two or three he has climbed, as well as the ones he has yet to conquer.

“We’ve seen your superhuman abilities this year”

That’s how we framed the invitation to this fall’s Regional Roundtables for Superheroes of HERA. It was our way of recognizing the larger-than-life effort that was required from financial aid staff to comply with the extensive changes in federal law.

In September we sponsored two day-long roundtable events—one in Pueblo and one in Bloomfield—where more than 60 financial aid professionals gathered for an update on the regulatory side of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005. We focused our presentation on the latest clarifying guidance and regulations within HERA, while attendees focused on thoughtful discussion of the most pressing issues on their campuses.

The “superheroes” agenda included sharing new information about eligibility of direct assessment programs and distance learning for financial aid, as well as state and federal teacher loan forgiveness programs, return of Title IV, repayment alignment, identity theft, Grad PLUS loans and consolidations.

Punctuated by trivia questions about superheroes (did you know that Wonder Woman’s earrings allow her to breathe in outer space?), the roundtables also featured an engaging and entertaining session about work/life balance. Nationally recognized expert Mary LoVerde, formerly of the University of Colorado School of Medicine, offered a break in the serious discussion with her humorous and meaningful view of the importance of blending career with a happy, healthy family life.

Additional free training sessions continued throughout the fall with the first half of our most recent four-part series in November. See the box below for more information about upcoming sessions.



“Superman” Dan Rodgers of College Access Network leads the September training and update on HERA issues.

upcoming financial aid training

If you have a solid knowledge of financial aid basics and the FFEL Program, consider exploring December’s training sessions:

Workshop 3: Loan Certification to Disbursement
Thursday, December 7 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Workshop 4: Withdrawal to Return of Funds
Friday, December 8 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, visit www.college-access.net and choose “Training Schedule” from the Quick Links menu, or contact Compliance Trainer Julia Alexander at jalexander@college-access.net.