
Executive Summary

Arapahoe Community College (ACC) opened its first Castle Rock campus in 2011 with 58 students, quickly growing to nearly 300 in less than a year. In 2019, thanks to an unprecedented partnership with the Town of Castle Rock, the Economic Development Council, Douglas County School District, and Colorado State University, ACC launched the 42,000 sq. ft. Sturm Collaboration Campus. Enrollment exceeded expectations with 653 students in its first semester and now serves 800–1,000 students each term.

This growth has been possible because of the Town's vision and investment, for which ACC is deeply grateful. While pandemic impacts and declining state funding delayed progress on the planned Phase 2 building, ACC remains firmly committed to its completion. We respectfully request extending the Building 2 Benchmark deadline from July 30, 2025, to July 30, 2032, to allow for realistic delivery.

Together, we have created a nationally recognized model that unites education, industry, and community to expand opportunity, strengthen the workforce, and shape Castle Rock's future. ACC looks forward to continuing this partnership and advancing the shared vision for the Sturm Collaboration Campus.

Value to Castle Rock Community

At ACC we work to increase and provide access to high quality education and training pathways leading to in-demand jobs with a focus on work-based learning. The Sturm Collaboration campus was created because of Castle Rock leaders, who envisioned expanded access to higher education to meet both student and industry needs. Their belief—that all learners should have pathways to quality education, good jobs, and economic mobility—led to the creation of the Sturm Collaboration Campus. Research confirms the value of local colleges: they strengthen economies, develop talent, and foster innovation. Community colleges, in particular, not only respond to workforce needs but actively shape them through partnerships and adaptive programming.

The Sturm Collaboration Campus is a nationally recognized example of this model. In July 2025, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon visited the Sturm campus to learn about our innovative workforce programs and community partnerships, underscoring the campus's role as an anchor for Castle Rock's economic and educational future.

Growing Enrollment & Increasing Opportunities

Since ACC's expansion into Douglas County, the Sturm Collaboration campus has experienced steady enrollment growth each semester. These increases in both numbers of students and program development continue, exemplifying ACC's and our partners' commitment to success. Some highlights since 2019 include:

- The Sturm Collaboration campus has served more than 10,000 students (general education/concurrent enrollment /partnership degrees, i.e., CSU).
- We have partnered with over 50 employers.
- With our partners, we have collaborated on more than 400 meaningful work-based learning experiences for students.

Despite statewide and national forecasts of enrollment decline due to fewer high school graduates, the Sturm Collaboration Campus has maintained strong, steady enrollment—demonstrating the success of our model.

- Enrollment growth – Increased from 653 students in Fall 2019 to 890 students in Fall 2024. This is an increase of 36%.
- In Spring 2021, Sturm experienced its highest headcount of 1,018 students and its highest FTE (full-time equivalency - measure for state funding) in Fall 2023 with 208.

On average, the Sturm campus serves approximately 900 students per semester in a co-located, cross-sector learning environment that brings together K–12, community college, university programs, and our local workforce board under one roof.

Increased & Expanded Enrollment Opportunities with Concurrent Enrollment (CE)

At ACC, we are extremely fortunate to have an extraordinarily strong partnership with Douglas County School District (DCSD). Built on a shared interest of increasing and expanding opportunities for students and their families, ACC and DCSD are close collaborators in this work. Since opening in 2019, concurrent enrollment at the Sturm Campus has nearly doubled, with over 200 high school students now taking college courses each semester. This growth not only demonstrates strong demand from our local schools but also reinforces the campus's role as a vital pipeline from high school to higher education and the workforce.

A portion of CE growth and enrollment numbers are delivered through the Sturm Campus. Specific DCSD CE highlights:

- The CE program at the Sturm Collaboration Campus has nearly doubled its scale since opening in 2019, strengthening its role as a pipeline from high school to higher education.
- CE enrollment has grown from 120 students in Fall 2019 to 175 in Spring 2025 (a 46% increase).
- Peaks include 214 students in Spring 2024, the highest concurrent enrollment so far.

Current Programs and New Programs Expansion/Development

ACC offers 100+ degrees and certificates, with the Sturm Collaboration Campus programs continually expanding in response to student demand, community needs, and input from business and industry partners. Current program offerings include:

- Business, Accounting & Marketing (certifications, degrees e.g., AA, BS from CSU)
- Computer Science, Cyber Security, Secure Software Development (AAS, AS, BAS & BS from CSU)
- Health: Physical Therapy, Exercise Science, Pre-Nursing, CNA (certifications, AAS, AS)
- General Education Transfer (AS, AA)

Building on the success of our Sturm programs, ACC will expand from existing associate degrees to offer Bachelor of Applied Science degrees in Business and Cybersecurity beginning this academic year.

In addition to strong enrollment growth, we are proud to announce the launch of the Colorado Space Institute (CSI) at the Sturm Collaboration Campus. CSI is designed to position Colorado as a national leader in space education and aerospace workforce development through strategic, integrated training and education. By partnering with aerospace industry leaders, the Institute is developing innovative, competency-based programs that address the needs of the national security, civil, and commercial space sectors. Since its inception in Spring 2024, CSI has already achieved several key milestones:

- Selected as a full member of the U.S. Space Command Academic Engagement Enterprise (USSPACECOM AEE), strengthening collaboration between leading academic institutions and USSPACECOM.
- Secured a \$200K private grant through partnership with the Colorado Space Business Roundtable, funding outreach, curriculum development, and K–20 professional development. This enabled CSI to launch the *Space Educator Bootcamp*, engaging 24 local teachers in curriculum design, industry tours, and direct connections to aerospace opportunities for students.
- Partnered with the Colorado Department of Labor & Employment to support teacher externships that bridge education and industry.
- Chosen as one of only 15 NASA Aerospace Workforce Hubs nationwide, tasked with leading a Colorado-wide initiative to develop sustainable training and education programs—supporting the national goal of adding 1 million skilled aerospace technicians by 2030.

This fall, we will expand our pathways, building the curriculum to include certificates and both associate and bachelor's degrees in Space Data Analysis, Operations, and Business. These programs will be work-based and intentionally designed to develop critical, creative thinkers who excel at proactive and effective communication in the workplace—preparing graduates to drive innovation and leadership in Colorado's space economy and beyond.

Moving Forward & Request to Town Council

ACC remains committed to advancing the Sturm Collaboration Campus to serve students, industry, and the community. We are deeply grateful for the Town of Castle Rock's partnership and continued support. While the \$1 million Phase 2 funding benchmark with the Town Council is past due, this report demonstrates the solid progress made at the Campus. In addition to pandemic impacts, several other factors support our request for an extension, including:

- State funding constraints: Colorado currently lacks capacity to fund higher education capital projects. For FY 2025–26, the state has signaled a 2.5% reduction in overall funding and the governor is proposing a \$12 million dollar cut to higher education.
- Regulatory requirements: State compliance requires submission of the Academic Program Plan, Facilities Master Plan, and Building Usage Plan before any capital requests can move forward. Some of these are submitted and approved and the remaining are underway to ensure readiness.
- Leadership transitions: In the last four years, ACC has seen turnover in key leadership positions essential to advancing Sturm initiatives, including the Vice Presidents of Instruction, Workforce, and Finance, as well as the Sturm Campus Director and Institutional Research leadership. Stability is now being restored, positioning us for forward momentum.

While these challenges slowed progress, they are temporary and being actively resolved. With an extension, ACC will be well-positioned to deliver Phase 2—maximizing the Town's initial investment, expanding workforce pipelines for local employers, and strengthening Castle Rock's reputation as a hub of education, innovation, and economic vitality.

Thank you.



Stephanie J. Fujii, PhD

President