

ABOUT CU DENVER

University of Colorado Denver

Education Your Way: Urban, Flexible, Lifelong

Founded in 1973, the University of Colorado Denver (CU Denver) offers a modern, comprehensive urban education with multiple paths to success—in life and career—delivered how, when, and where you want it. CU Denver is the state's premier public urban research university, offering more than 100 degree programs in seven schools and colleges and across a spectrum of bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and professional and continuing education options. Research, internship, and apprenticeship experiences are a hallmark of a CU Denver education, giving learners an excellent education and real-work skills and job experience along the way.

Globally connected and locally invested, CU Denver partners with more than 15,000 future-focused learners—among the most diverse in the state—to design accessible, relevant, transformative educational experiences for every stage of life and career. Our proximity to downtown Denver enables many opportunities to enhance lives, careers, and professional networks as we are located within steps of the city's business, political, and arts corridor—and we have deep partnerships in the city, state, and region to help create or accelerate learners' paths.

Our leading faculty inspires and works alongside students to solve complex challenges through boundary-breaking innovation and impactful research and creative work. As part of the state's largest university system, CU Denver is a major contributor to the Colorado economy, with 2,000 employees and an annual economic impact of \$800 million.

About Our Students

The diversity of our student body is a source of deep pride. With students of color making up 50 percent of the student body, CU Denver is the most diverse research university in Colorado. Classes are filled with traditional students who enrolled after high school as well as transfer students and those who delayed college entry. Many professionals enroll mid-career to retool and strengthen their skills. The average age of an undergraduate student is 23 years while the average graduate student is 32 years old.

Bringing a rich mix of backgrounds, students travel across the country and the world to attend CU Denver. Domestic students come from 52 states and US territories and international students from 135 countries. All take advantage of convenient courses at times that meet their schedules. An enviable student-to-faculty ratio of 18:1 and a high-tech advising platform means students receive focused attention from professors and a clear path to graduation.

University Quick Facts

CU Denver Quick Facts*

Enrollment

- 13,968 students
- 70% undergraduate, 30% graduate/professional
- 74% full-time students
- 82% from Colorado
- 13% nonresident students of which International students come from 135 different countries
- 43% male, 56% female

Student-to-Faculty Ratio

- 17:1

Diverse Population

- 55% of enrolled students are students of color
- 51% of all new enrolled students are students of color
- Average age of undergraduate students: 23
- Average age of graduate students: 32
- Students from 52 states and US territories and 135 countries

Average entering ACT score

- 23.2 Composite

Average entering SAT score

- 554 Math
- 559 Verbal

Average high school GPA

- 3.5

Schools and Colleges on the CU Denver Campus

College of Architecture and Planning (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/>)

College of Arts & Media (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-arts-media-cam/>)

Business School (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/business-school/>)

School of Education & Human Development (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-education-human-development/>)

College of Engineering, Design and Computing (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-engineering-design-computing/>)

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/>)

School of Public Affairs (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-public-affairs/>)

Programs

More than 110 degrees and programs across seven schools and colleges

Degrees

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctoral
- First professional

Most-enrolled Undergraduate Degree Programs

- Biology
- Psychology
- Computer Science
- Fine Arts
- Music

Most-enrolled Graduate Degree Programs

- Business Administration
- Information Systems
- Leadership for Education Equity

- Public Administration
- Accounting

Research Funding

More than \$400 million in sponsored research annually

Alumni

- 112,000+ alumni
- 69% live in Colorado

National Rankings

US News and World Report 2022

- #129 in Top Public Schools
- #114 Top Performer on Social Mobility
- #167 in Best Undergraduate Engineering programs
- #126 in Best Engineering Schools
- #28 in Graduate Healthcare Management programs
- #28 among Graduate Public Affairs programs
 - #9 – Environmental Policy and Management
 - #18 – Nonprofit Management
 - #18 – Public Finance and Budgeting
 - #28 – Public Management and Leadership
 - #21 – Local Government
- #99 in Best Graduate Education Schools

*Based on Fall 2023 enrollment

About the Chancellor

Kenneth T. Christensen, PhD, was appointed to serve as Chancellor of CU Denver in February 2025. He previously served as provost, senior vice president for academic affairs, and chief academic officer at Illinois Institute of Technology.

During his time as provost, Dr. Christensen built a diverse leadership team that collaboratively emphasized strong shared governance to ensure the growth and success of Illinois Tech's diverse student population. This included launching academic initiatives that emphasize workforce readiness, introducing a pathway for undecided students to explore degree possibilities, and charging a university-wide task force to modernize the core curriculum around an entrepreneurial mindset, design and innovation, computational and data literacy, and leadership.

Dr. Christensen passionately co-led Illinois Tech's path to Hispanic-Serving Institution status and drove strategic fundraising and partnership building to expand the institution's impact in education, research, and economic development, while also ensuring it was a foundational partner in regional research consortia. He first joined Illinois Tech in 2020 as the Carol and Ed Kaplan Armour College Dean of Engineering. Prior to that, he served on the faculty at Notre Dame, the University of Illinois, and the University of New Mexico.

A native of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Dr. Christensen holds degrees in mechanical engineering and theoretical and applied mechanics from the University of New Mexico, the California Institute of Technology, and the University of Illinois.

CU Denver Strategic Priorities

CU Denver 2030 Strategic Plan

CU Denver's 2030 strategic plan is a profound repositioning of CU Denver to be a public urban research university that works for all: learners of all kinds and at all stages of life, industries and employers that need talent ready to hit the ground running, and communities requiring new solutions and discoveries.

Goals for 2030

Our plan is designed to not only reset the playing field, but to change the game, increase access to an excellent education, and tackle some of the grandest challenges facing our society, all in service of the idea that CU Denver should work for all.

1. CU Denver will be the first equity-serving institution in the nation
2. Become known as a university for life
3. Be internationally known for its research and creative work
4. Serve as the anchor institution for an open innovation district in downtown Denver
5. Be known as a people-centered "Best Place to Work"

To learn more about CU Denver's Strategic Planning initiatives, please visit our website (<https://www.ucdenver.edu/about/leadership/strategic-planning/>).

History Spanning More Than 50 Years

Located on the downtown Auraria Campus and stretching into Denver's central business district, the University of Colorado Denver educates 15,000 students in the heart of an emerging global city. Part of the University of Colorado system (<https://www.cu.edu/about-cu-system/>), CU Denver was officially founded in 1973. Throughout our history we have supported students from all walks of life, and we are committed to being a university that works for all (<http://ucdenver.edu/2030/>).

Our Origins

CU Denver is located on the traditional territories and ancestral homelands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Ute nations. We acknowledge the painful history of genocide and forced removal from this territory and pay our respects to the diverse Indigenous Peoples still connected to this land. We give thanks to all Tribal Nations and the ancestors of this place and have developed a formal Land Acknowledgement (<https://news.ucdenver.edu/this-land-is-their-land-universities-and-indigenous-acknowledgment-statements/>) as one way to honor this past.

Our recent history acknowledges the Auraria neighborhood— (<https://news.ucdenver.edu/honoring-displaced-aurarians-and-their-families-now-and-into-the-future/>) composed largely of Hispanic community members—that was dismantled in the 1970s to construct the Auraria Higher Education Campus (AHEC) of which CU Denver is a part. CU Denver is committed to honoring the displaced Aurarians in multiple ways, including through the expanded Displaced Aurarian Scholarship Program and a commitment to revitalize historic Ninth Street Park (<https://ucdenver.edu/about-cu-denver/cudenveronninth/>).

Honoring Our Past

CU Denver continues to acknowledge its past and that of Colorado's — from its ancestral lands and Hispanic heritage to its modern-day

operation as a premier minority-serving public research institution making education work for all.

CU Denver Timeline

Take a look at where we began, occupying one building in downtown Denver, and where we ended up—we now serve more than 15,000 students a year.

1800s - Early 1900s

Gold Sparks a New Neighborhood

The history of Auraria is one of the oldest of modern-day Denver. In the years leading up to the 1800s, this land was the home of the Cheyenne, Ute, and Arapaho. Auraria, or aurum, is Latin for “gold,” which was found in the Cherry Creek in 1858, igniting a small gold rush that established the Auraria settlement. Houses, businesses, and places of worship were built in the Auraria neighborhood over the next 50 years, and the neighborhood evolved over time to become largely Hispanic.

The Tivoli Brewery, built in 1870 in the Auraria neighborhood, operated for nearly 100 years before closing in 1966. It was restored and opened in 1994 as the Auraria Campus Student Union. Today the Tivoli Student Union houses offices, study areas, the campus bookstore, restaurants, and a revived brewery.

1912 - 1960s

CU Expands in Denver

CU Denver originated in 1912, when the University of Colorado’s Department of Correspondence and Extension was established to meet the needs of Denver’s growing population. Holding classes in buildings across Speer Boulevard from the Auraria neighborhood—including in the Frontier Hotel’s bar—the institution became known as Denver’s “UCLA” (the University of Colorado between Lawrence and Arapahoe Streets).

As course offerings expanded, the Denver Extension Center was renamed the University of Colorado Denver Center in 1965. It was an institution that at its root helped nontraditional, working students pursue degrees, build skills, or simply enrich their lives near where they lived and worked. Demand grew and by 1969, 23 fields of undergraduate study and 11 of graduate study were offered. A Colorado constitutional amendment established CU Denver as an independent institution in 1973.

1970s

A Neighborhood Displaced

During the early 1970s, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development designated the Auraria neighborhood an urban renewal area and Denver voters approved a referendum and bond issue to build the Auraria Campus. In a unique arrangement, three institutions of higher education—CU Denver, Metropolitan State University Denver, and the Community College of Denver—would be housed on one campus.

By 1974, most of the buildings in the Auraria neighborhood were condemned and razed.

A well-established, close-knit, largely Hispanic community of more than 300 households was displaced in the name of urban development. Thirteen cottages and one grocery store were preserved. Today they make up the 9th Street historic park on campus, the oldest restored block of residences in the city.

The university began the Displaced Aurarian Scholarship program ([https://www.ucdenver.edu/student-finances/scholarships/displaced-](https://www.ucdenver.edu/student-finances/scholarships/displaced-aurarian/#:~:text=The%20Displaced%20Aurarian%20Scholarship%20is,to%20descendants%20of%20these%20residents)

[aurarian/#:~:text=The%20Displaced%20Aurarian%20Scholarship%20is,to%20descendants%20of%20these%20residents](https://www.ucdenver.edu/student-finances/scholarships/displaced-aurarian/#:~:text=The%20Displaced%20Aurarian%20Scholarship%20is,to%20descendants%20of%20these%20residents)) in the 1990s to provide tuition and fees for former residents of the Auraria neighborhood and their children and grandchildren. The university expanded the program in 2021 as part of a long-term effort to honor and support the displaced Aurarians and acknowledge the long-term impacts the taking of their homes has had on them, their families, and their livelihoods.

1980s – Today

Auraria and CU Denver Today

The establishment of this unique, innovative, tri-institutional campus, while carrying a difficult history, has made it possible for hundreds of thousands of people to improve their own lives through an affordable, high-quality education. Today the Auraria Campus serves more than 40,000 students across all three institutions.

CU Denver has grown, as well. As the most diverse research university in Colorado, CU Denver today draws top students each year and offers over 110 undergraduate and graduate degree programs (<https://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/>) across eight schools and colleges, as well as more than 30 online degree programs and numerous certificate and non-degree programs. (<https://online.cu.edu/>)

Home to more than 40 research centers and institutes, the campus receives sponsored research awards annually to generate knowledge and create solutions to society’s most complex problems. CU Denver fills a singular niche as a vital contributor to the civic, cultural, and economic success of the city, the state, and beyond.

In more recent years:

- Downtown Denver has flourished, and CU Denver’s geographic footprint has expanded
- We opened the the Lola and Rob Salazar Student Wellness Center (<https://news.ucdenver.edu/lola-rob-salazar-student-wellness-center-opens-july-11/>)
- We introduced club and intramural sports
- We built our first freshmen dorm in City Heights and a companion Learning Commons (<https://news.ucdenver.edu/new-city-heights-residence-hall-and-learning-commons-opens/>) facility for teaching and learning
- We launched an ambitious 2030 Strategic Plan (<https://news.ucdenver.edu/work-for-all-how-cu-denver-will-become-a-leading-public-urban-research-university-by-2030/>) that aims to make education work for all
- We announced the planned revitalization of historic Ninth Street Park (<https://www.denverpost.com/2022/03/31/auraria-campus-ninth-street-historic-district-renovations/>) and the construction of a brand new engineering, design, and computing building (<https://news.ucdenver.edu/new-engineering-design-and-computing-building-will-serve-as-anchor-for-innovation-district-outlined-in-2030-strategic-plan/>), the anchor of our forthcoming innovation district

Accreditation

The University of Colorado Denver is institutionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

The commission can be contacted at:

Higher Learning Commission
230 South LaSalle Street, Suite 7-500

Chicago, IL 60604
800.621.7449
www.hlcommission.org (<http://www.hlcommission.org/>)

Many professional organizations have also granted accreditation to specific academic programs, colleges and schools at the Denver Campus, including:

College of Architecture and Planning (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/>)

- National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAB)
- Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board (LAAB)
- Planning Accreditation Board (PAB)

Business School (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/business-school/>)

- Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business - International (AACSB International)
- AACSB
- Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Management Education (CAHME)

School of Education & Human Development (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-education-human-development/>)

- Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Department on Higher Education
- Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE)
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
- National Association of School Psychologists
- American Psychological Association - Commission on Accreditation

College of Engineering, Design and Computing (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-engineering-design-computing/>)

- Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
- ABET - Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC)
- ABET - Computing Accreditation Commission (CAC)

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/>)

- American Chemical Society (ACS) approved degree
- American Psychological Association

School of Public Affairs (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-public-affairs/>)

- National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)

For more information regarding specialized accreditations for degree programs, please visit this website (<https://www.ucdenver.edu/offices/institutional-research-and-effectiveness/data-analysis/institutional-data/>

#ac-specialized-accreditations-for-degree-programs-6) or contact the school or college.

Our Programs

As Colorado's only public urban research university, CU Denver is devoted to the needs of the residents of the city and the region. A solid foundation of academic and general education is assured through a comprehensive core curriculum. Students may pursue graduate education through all of the campus' colleges and schools. Pre-professional training in the fields of education, architecture, law, journalism and health careers is also available. Complete listings of areas of study available on the Denver Campus are available in the Programs (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/programs-a-z/>) section of the catalog.

The colleges and schools sections of this catalog provide information on bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs, policies on requirements for graduation, course requirements, course descriptions and other similar information.

- College of Architecture and Planning (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-architecture-planning/>)
- College of Arts & Media (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-arts-media/>)
- Business School (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/business-school/>)
- School of Education & Human Development (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-education-human-development/>)
- College of Engineering, Design and Computing (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-engineering-design-computing/>)
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/>)
- School of Public Affairs (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/school-public-affairs/>)

Continuing and Professional Education

The Division of Continuing and Professional Education offers certificate/certification courses, professional development programs, precollegiate outreach programs and personal enrichment courses across the state of Colorado. Courses are offered in a variety of formats, including traditional on-campus, off-campus, online, hybrid, weekend, evening, short and condensed courses and many others.

Registration and tuition vary by school or college. Contact the specific school or college to learn about current program and course offerings or send an inquiry to continuingeducation@ucdenver.edu.