

PASSION, PRIDE, PROMISE - INAUGURATION 2016

Dr. Leah L. Bornstein – Sixth President of Aims Community College

Welcome, Everyone!

It is an honor to stand before you as the sixth president of Aims Community College.

Presidential installations are defining moments in the history of an organization. It is a time of transition and a time to recognize how past lessons and accomplishments point to the future. Today, we celebrate all that has been achieved, who we are now and everything we will become.

Let's take a moment to acknowledge that we are building on the accomplishments of those who served before us. To reflect on the important role of translating and transferring knowledge to the next generation. To consider the impressive transformation of our learners during their time with us as they develop academically and personally. And to be conscious of the importance of community engagement. Transformative change is not a new phenomenon for an institution of such scope charting its path toward its 50th anniversary.

Over the past 49 years:

- The voters in 11 of the Weld County's 12 public school districts approved a community college district and Aims Community College opened its doors in 1967 to 950 students.
- In 1969, this permanent site was purchased for the Greeley Campus where the Trades and Industry, Emergency Services, & Welding Technology buildings were subsequently built.
- In 1984, Southern Campus in Fort Lupton was opened,
- Aims taught its 100,000th student (1987) and the Loveland location was established initially as a shared facility with Regis College and the City of Loveland.
- Since 1995, the Flight Training Center housed at the Greeley/Weld County airport, the Monfort Early Childhood Education Center, the College Center and the Allied Health and Sciences buildings have been built.
- Aims was named the top 10 Digital Community Colleges by the Center of Digital Education and the American Association of Community Colleges (2005).

- 2007 award-winning services were established: Emerging Scholars, AAA, iFocus & TRiO.
- The Aims College Promise Scholarship Program was launched in 2008.
- In 2010, Windsor Auto and Tech Center was added to the Aims Community College arsenal of cutting edge programs.
- In 2013, the college was declared “debt-free”, the new Platte Building for oil and gas training opened in Fort Lupton, and the Catalyst program was launched.
- Windsor Charter Academy and Early College HS were added to the outstanding list of academic pathways that Aims Community College supports in 2014.
- In 2015, the remodel of the Physical Education and Recreation Center Building was completed to support the wellness of our learners, employees and northern Colorado citizens.
- Two weeks ago, we opened the Public Safety Institute in Windsor, establishing that site as a true campus-like location.
- Aims ranked as the best community college in Colorado by WalletHub this past fall (2015) and...
- An economic impact study - conducted two months ago - found that Aims Community College generates \$542 million annually for the region – quite a return on investment!

Aims Community College has managed to evolve while maintaining a learner-centered outlook that respects individuality and thrives on diversity. It is a hub of education and ideas. This spirit pervades every aspect of our institution. Since arriving in August, I have spent much time listening and learning, and this is what I know: Aims honors its mission not by looking back or standing still, but by creatively building upon our successes and seeking new expressions of supporting learners; through “passion” which describes the energy that flows through the people at this institution and this greater community – a passion for life, a passion for learning and a passion for serving one another; and, through “pride” – pride in Aims Community College, pride in working with cutting-edge, comprehensive programs, and pride in the contributions each of us makes to the college everyday.

Aims Community College’s strong, positive reputation is built on passionate, dedicated faculty and staff; vibrant –comprehensive programs and services; financial stability; affordable tuition and fees; beautiful and well-maintained facilities; a culture that cares about its employees making it an extremely desirable place to work; and a focus on student success, innovation, continuous improvement and the value we add to the greater community.

Our story is not just about Aims Community College as an institution – it is about the people. Our strength arises from within. It is a force comprised of all the elements that lead us to believe no other place is quite like this one, or ever could be. It is up to us to define who we are today, always with an eye to what we want to be in the future. How we educate, how we allocate resources, how we innovate are not just impactful at a single point in time, but rather will open or close doors to our future prosperity. Making decisions with this in mind will help us adjust to changing times and allow us to continue to do great things!

We are no longer confined to influencing only what immediately surrounds us. We are a global community, and the world needs us! Individual and collective accomplishments of Aims Community College, resulting from decades of tremendous growth and progress, are substantial, and the responsibility of insuring its ongoing vitality is daunting and also exciting! Aims Community College is an outstanding college with an enviable future. We enjoy this position because staying true to ourselves - learning-centered and focused on student success - has always been a priority and our commitment. Our values are reflected in our approach to producing skilled graduates who will join the workforce as assets to the local, state and national economy. Aims attracts learners from all walks of life, pursuing a wide range of dreams because of this commitment.

This commitment to student success, to one another, and a deep respect for the resilience of the human spirit contribute to the distinction of Aims Community College. This distinctiveness is our greatest advantage. Just as our learners are diverse and varied, Aims does not easily fit into any kind of mold. We have the good fortune of being able to approach our future as a place that defies convention and is willing to take calculated risks.

Our progress and our future do not exist independently of the path of higher education in our country and beyond. Sometimes it is nice to be reminded by someone arriving from the outside how the college, Weld County and communities throughout the region are intertwined and help strengthen one another. How each challenge holds the promise for improvement and innovation. How our resources are greater when we join together to address them collectively.

This is one of the most challenging times in the history of higher education and perhaps the most exciting as well. We have disruptive forces that range from course delivery models to issues of affordability. As we move forward, we will meet these challenges with creativity and innovation; with inclusivity; with adaptation and evolution; with thoughtful strategy; and with passion!

As we look to the future, it is time to remind our region who we are! Time for all of us to be Aims Ambassadors and help the citizens of northern Colorado and beyond understand that the learners at Aims Community College are enrolled in nationally recognized programs and services. That the students are supported through completion with programs like CORE, TRiO, Catalyst, Emerging Scholars, iFocus and Early Alert. That the instructional equipment on which our students are trained is not only equipment being utilized in industry today but also equipment that will be utilized in the future.

For example, Communication Media students utilize a multi-million dollar recording studio fully designed for live and professional recordings; students in Precision Agriculture learn how to fly drones and utilize robotic farming; Auto Tech students have access to a tool program sponsored by Snap-On Tools and build and race a car at Bandamere Speedway in Denver through the Full Throttle student club; the Aviation students learn on multitudes of simulators – one a full size full motion simulator; a 4D virtual cadaver resembling an operating table and has the ability to load data from real-life patients is being used to train EMS students; Fire Science learners enjoy training with a sand table, Fire Vent, and Fire Tower; with Aims Community College being appointed a regional Alternate Care Facility & Point of Distribution - students enrolled in our health and sciences programs such as Nursing and Surgical Tech have access to various forms of simulators, mannequins, and instrumentation in the full surgical suite where their courses take place; finally, Environment Tech and Welding students practice their skills on mechatronic workstations, multimaterial 3D printers, and robotic welding systems. And there are many other “toys” that certainly make me want to “play” with them all!

With all of this wonderful instructional support, it is time to insure our operations, processes, and infrastructure support our cutting-edge programs and services to meet the 21st century needs of our learners and communities. And, It is time to tell our story!

To the many community leaders who are participating today, thank you for your warm welcome to Joe and me. We look forward to greeting you as colleagues, partners and friends.

To each of the colleges that comprise the Colorado Community College system, Colorado Mountain College and each University that serves our great state, I offer my appreciation for the formal and informal ways we collectively strive to make one another better for the benefit of all Colorado citizens.

To the Board of Trustees, I am grateful for your confidence in my leadership, skills and experience. Together, we will have many great adventures over the next few years.

To Aims Community College faculty, staff, students and alumni, your efforts and talents define us! On this day, I am briefly at the forefront, but each day it is you that represent the college and the many faces of our community. As you move on from this day, returning to your professional positions or the classroom and facing your own opportunities and challenges, I hope you will recognize the importance of your role as Aims Ambassadors and appreciate the influence you have on all that we accomplish together as Aims Community College!

Our momentum has carried us to this place and time – to a period in which the stewardship has passed to me. I am well aware of the responsibility of this role of service. I recognize the trust you place in me is significant, and it is with great pride and passion that I offer my promise and commitment to the success of Aims Community College!