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business

Auraria pays off for Colorado state investment

Study shows state investment dollars well-leveraged

By Aldo Svaldi
The Denver Post

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Anna Ropp leads a University of Colorado Denver psychology class on the Auraria campus Tuesday. A study shows that each dollar spent by the state on the campus results in \$11 spent in Colorado. (Photos by Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

Auraria's new gold

The \$95.8 million the state provides the Auraria campus helps generate more than \$1 billion in direct and indirect economic activity for the state. There were 7,528 direct jobs and 6,510 jobs created. Direct spending represents spending by students, campus operations and visitors, and on construction projects. Indirect spending represents additional expenditures resulting from direct spending.



*Construction impacts not included in total.

Source: The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of the Auraria Campus, Development Research Partners
The Denver Post

The three schools that make up the Auraria campus account for more than \$1 billion in spending in the state a year, according to a new study.

In all, the campus generates \$11 in spending for every dollar the state contributes, the study by Development Research Partners in Littleton found.

"For the first time, we have concrete evidence

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that shows what the impact of the campus is on the local community and on the state," said Dean Wolf, executive director of the Auraria Foundation.

The state provided \$95.8 million in the last fiscal year toward maintenance operations, grants and resident tuition at Auraria's three schools — the University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State College of Denver and Community



The Auraria Campus Bookstore is located in the Tivoli student union on campus. According to a new study from the Downtown Denver Partnership, the Auraria campus generates \$475 million in direct spending each year and employs 7,500 workers. Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post (THE DENVER POST | Kathryn Scott Osler)

College of Denver.

In return, the campus generated \$474.8 million in direct spending — or \$5 for every dollar the state put in.

Not counting tuition, student spending generated \$162.4 million in financial activity, while campus operations generated \$309 million in spending. Visitors to the campus spent \$3.4 million.

That direct spending in turn generated another \$577.7 million in secondary or indirect spending, the study found.

An example of indirect spending would be the money a bookstore spends after students had shopped there for textbooks and supplies.

"That whole calculation shows how the institutions are leveraging the state dollars to generate economic activity," said economist Patricia Silverstein, who authored the study.

Auraria institutions have about 43,000 students enrolled — about one of every five college students in the state — and the campus employs 7,500 workers, Wolf said.

Yet Auraria and its schools don't garner the same attention in discussions of higher education as CU-Boulder or CSU-Fort Collins.

The Downtown Denver Partnership commissioned the study with a grant from the Auraria Foundation.

Creating a closer connection between the campus and downtown is one of the partnership's top seven goals over the next 20 years, said Tami Door, the partnership's president and chief executive.

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The cafeteria at the Tivoli student union is busy during the lunch hour. According to a new study from the Downtown Denver Partnership, the Auraria campus generates \$475 million in direct spending each year and employs 7,500 workers. Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post (THE DENVER POST | Kathryn Scott Osler)

businesses aware of the resources the campus can provide.

*Aldo Svaldi: 303-954-1410 or
asvaldi@denverpost.com*

That includes not just a physical connection that overcomes the divide Speer Boulevard creates but a perceptual and economic connection.

"How do we integrate the campus into downtown?" asked Door, who is also chairman of the board of the Auraria Campus Higher Education Center.

Planners are trying to bring new construction closer to Speer and eliminate the empty gap between the campus and downtown, created when the campus was built in the 1970s.

The partnership is working to make downtown

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