

## Elements of Flagship 2030

By Rishi Raj, Professor

I joined my present Department as an Assistant Professor in 1971, but left to join the faculty of Materials Science and Engineering at Cornell University in 1975, and then returned to Boulder in 1996. Thus my perspective for the future of our University stems, firstly, from my love for this institution, from a belief in the importance of Universities in American life (I often think of them as the fourth leg of our system), and, finally, from a first hand experience of a private and a state-administered academic institution.

I believe that an effective strategic plan must have a few, overarching elements that guide us in our path towards a luminescent future. This brief note dwells on these elements.

**(i) A new self-image:** A dynamic institution requires open discussion of issues that affect its progress towards excellence. There may be serious disagreements within our internal community. But to the world at large we must present ourselves as being worthy, proud and idealistic. We depend upon philanthropy: we must, therefore, come across as being accountable and in pursuit of noble and innovative goals to those who give back to us to become what we wish to seem to be. The culture of the University should instill pride, in our faculty, our staff, and most of all our students. (Incidentally, internal competitions for small amounts of money distract from this collective vision).

**(ii) Leading the World:** Our universities are one of our greatest treasures. They attract the best and the most ambitious to come and contribute to America, either by staying here, or by returning to bring radical political and economic change to their home countries. The process is slow, and often oblique, but it has worked in countless ways (India would not be what it is becoming without the back flow of her citizens educated and cultured in the American values and thoughts). Over the next twenty-five years, our Universities must evolve to meet this challenge in new ways. We need not only to educate foreign students on our own soil, but we must take our experience, methods, and idealism, abroad to education foreign students on their own soil. At the present time several models to achieve this goal are being attempted. We must experiment aggressively to find what can work for us.

**(iii) Evolving into a Private Institution:** Our instinct (at the Boulder Campus) is to be un-bureaucratic, to make good decisions quickly, and efficiently. However, we are becoming increasingly constrained by over-regulation. Certainly our financial management system must improve (as it doing), and personal accountability must filter down to everyone who works here, which requires strict controls, as well as a change in the perception of our responsibilities. It is probably unrealistic to imagine that we can, one day, become totally divorced from the State of Colorado. However, we can begin by creating islands of independence and autonomy which allow individual units to grow and prosper, setting an example for the others.