

To: Members of the Common Curriculum Planning Committee

From: Russell L. Moore, Provost

Subject: Committee's Charge

Date: September 23, 2021

CU Boulder offers its undergraduate students an exceptional array of educational options with 80 undergraduate majors, 75 minors, and 40 certificates across more than 50 academic disciplines. The opportunity before us now is to define what our degree programs' many and diverse educational missions have in common. By the time they leave the university with their degrees in hand, what skills, expertise, and frameworks of thought should our undergraduate students share? How does that shared academic experience reflect CU Boulder's mission and values?

Responding to a report by the [Higher Learning Commission](#), CU Boulder's accrediting body, Chancellor Phil DiStefano in 2020 declared [CU Boulder's commitment](#) to creating a common learning experience and a common set of intended learning outcomes for CU Boulder undergraduates. This commitment is grounded in the 2018 recommendation of the university's [Academic Futures](#) strategic initiative to define common educational touch points throughout the undergraduate experience and in the 2019 [Interdisciplinary Working Group's](#) call to create a range of both disciplinary and interdisciplinary educational experiences for our students.

I now charge you, the members of the Common Curriculum Planning Committee, with leading the university in the identification and design development of a common curriculum through which our undergraduate students will achieve shared learning goals that address integrative values and common touch points throughout the undergraduate career. I seek your guidance in proposing campus-wide learning goals that reflect both a deliberate statement about who we are as a university and that complement and enhance all of our educational programs. When our students graduate they should not only have pride in their disciplinary choice, but also recognize that their degree from CU Boulder is a distinction that matters.

I have directed Katherine Eggert, senior vice provost for academic planning and assessment, and Daryl Maeda, dean and vice provost for undergraduate education, to co-chair the committee and to work with the professional staff members who will provide you with the information and resources you need to complete your task.

As you embark upon your work, I direct you specifically to engage previous information and recommendations generated by the campus, as well as the university's ongoing commitments and expressions of values.

- Earlier this year, representatives of my office engaged all of our academic programs in a listening tour involving faculty, staff, and students across more than 80 academic and student support units, student groups, and open fora to gather the campus community's ideas about what a common curriculum might look like. The tour also included an ongoing call for white papers on the subject. As you begin your work, I ask you to study the thoughts generated by this effort and to determine and announce an end date for receiving further white papers.

- You will also be guided by a wealth of even earlier discussion and deliberation. In particular, I ask you to understand the determinations of the [Academic Futures Committee](#). The group described common curriculum guideposts that your work should follow, namely:
  - all undergraduates should have a common curricular experience;
  - the common curriculum should include shared touch points throughout the undergraduate degree timeline; and
  - the common curriculum should not duplicate or emulate the general education requirements of our colleges and schools.
  
- I ask you to keep in mind how your work will help give expression to the determinations of the [Inclusion, Diversity and Excellence in Academics \(IDEA\) Plan](#). In particular, the common curriculum must mirror the campus commitment to foster intercultural competence and to prepare critical thinkers who innovate through embracing multiple perspectives.
  
- Finally, I ask you to articulate a common curriculum plan that helps to articulate [CU Boulder's three strategic imperatives](#): to shape tomorrow's leaders, to be the top university for innovation, and to positively impact humanity.

While the intricate details of implementing a common curriculum will require several years of further campus effort, your task as a planning committee will take place during the current academic year. The first phase coincides with the fall 2021 semester and involves studying the above inputs and also the following:

- an inventory of undergraduate education requirements of CU Boulder's colleges and schools;
- curricular practices elsewhere, especially among CU Boulder's public AAU peer institutions; and
- CU Boulder's responsibilities as an accredited institution and the terms of our recent re-accreditation by the [Higher Learning Commission](#).

I expect the culmination of your fall explorations to be a documented set of learning goals and coordinating objectives that represent the integrative values, learning outcomes and common touch points that should be addressed within the common curriculum.

The second phase of your work will commence in the early part of the spring 2022 semester, when you will present these common expectations and core values to the campus along with a draft common curriculum structure. This presentation to the campus should provide the campus community with a clear understanding of the common curriculum's purpose and its connection to faculty members' common values and to students' common needs. I will ask you to make yourselves available to the campus in multiple publicly announced meetings, to visit with our principal student, faculty, and administrative representative bodies, and to consider feedback provided in written form. After you have had a chance to reflect on what people have to say about your plan, I will ask you to make any necessary revisions and to submit your recommendations to me by June 1, 2022.

Sincerely,



Russell L. Moore  
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs