

## **Re-establishing ATLAS Institute as a Campus-Wide Resource**

### **Submitted by the College of Media, Communication and Information (CMCI)**

What we propose: We propose that the Chancellor return the ATLAS Institute to its intended purpose as a state of the art whole-campus resource by moving formal oversight of the building and the Center for Media, Arts and Performance (CMAP) to a Council of Deans formed from all CU Boulder colleges. We also propose creating a panel to review courses in the TAM minor and certificate to determine where overlap with other programs exists, and to avoid redundancies. At the completion of the review, the panel and Dean's Council would provide the Chancellor with a recommendation of the most appropriate management and oversight structure for all ATLAS programs, including CMAP and TAM—either through a single college or as a joint effort.

Why the campus needs it: The original mission of ATLAS—both the Institute and the building—was to serve the entire campus. The ATLAS Collaborative Media, Arts and Performance program was created in 2003 through a collaboration between art, film, journalism, music, theater and dance, and other disciplines. The vitality of that partnership now seems lost.

The ATLAS Institute moved under the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) in 2013. The then-Dean of CEAS stated, "As campus-wide assets, the administrative oversight of the ATLAS building and CMAP will roll up under the Graduate School, rather than Engineering." This implies an awareness of the need to separate CEAS programs from the physical assets of the ATLAS building.

However, CMAP states on its own website that it is the performance space for the ATLAS Institute and much of the programming is for ATLAS-affiliated activities. The TAM minor and certificate programs, housed in CEAS, enroll more than 1,000 CU Boulder undergraduate students from more than 55 majors. All ATLAS Institute faculty are rostered in CEAS and BS, MS and PhD programs are offered through CEAS. Therefore, ATLAS has become a CEAS-centric program that no longer fully embodies the full campus resource it was created to be.

The TAM minor and certificate programs are parallel in many aspects to degree programs in other campus departments and colleges, especially the CMCI, which didn't exist when the TAM certificate program was created. Today, the TAM curriculum and the CEAS faculty who deliver it fit more squarely within the core competencies of the CMCI than in CEAS, and the lack of CMCI involvement in governing or coordinating the delivery of the TAM curriculum is unnecessarily confusing for students, parents, and potential donors, who see competition where there should be seamless integration. Overall, these redundancies are an inefficient use of the ATLAS building and the faculty, staff, and administrative time now devoted to running programs separate in name, location, and administration.

What are the obstacles: Rather than collaborating, non-CEAS departments and colleges are forced to compete with TAM for students and resources, which poses unnecessary teaching and administrative costs to the entire campus. There is currently no centralized campus-level oversight committee or mechanism to review courses, as review is at the program level. More rigorous exploration of the TAM curriculum would prevent course redundancies, leading to less competition for classrooms, research labs, makerspaces and administrative support, all of which would allow our campus to operate more efficiently and ultimately benefit our students.

Conclusion: Undertaking a review of TAM minor and certificate curriculum and creating a council of college deans to work together to determine the most appropriate oversight of the ATLAS building and programs could result in reduced redundancies, consolidate resources and enhance opportunities to fully optimize academic offerings, ultimately creating a seamless path for students interested in media, art and technology research and creative work.