Report of a Visit to the
University of Colorado at Boulder
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for the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the North Central Association of College and Schools
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1. Introduction

This is a report of a comprehensive evaluation for continued accreditation of the University of Colorado at Boulder, conducted by an evaluation team organized by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The University of Colorado at Boulder was first accredited by the North Central Association (NCA) in 1913. The university was last reviewed and its accreditation continued in 1989.

The team visited the university April 17-19, 2000. During the visit, members of the team met with and interviewed a large number of individuals and groups. At the time of its visit, the team focused on the university’s Self-Study document entitled *A Community of Learners*, dated April, 2000. The team found the university’s Self-Study Report to be thorough, complete, comprehensive, and very well done. All who contributed to the Self-Study are commended by the team, particularly the Self-Study co-chairs Pauline Hale, Coordinator, Office of the Chancellor and William H. Kaempfer, Associate Vice Chancellor. The team also thanks Chancellor Richard L. Byyny and his many colleagues for their hard work in creating the schedule for the visit, arranging group meetings, and, with grace and efficiency, successfully fulfilling team requests for last-minute meetings.

The current Self-Study begins by referencing each of the four “areas of concern” and six “suggestions” generated in the accreditation team 1989 report and gives details of the solutions and initiatives implemented in response to each point. These are reviewed in Section II of this report.
Section III of the report contains findings concerning the university's satisfaction of the Commission's General Institutional Requirements, and Section IV discusses the Criteria for Accreditation.

Section V covers federal compliance and third party comments. Institutional strengths and challenges are highlighted in Section VI.

Section VII outlines the team's recommendation and rationale concerning reaccreditation of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

II. Institution's Response to Previously Identified Concerns/Challenges

A. Low Level of State Funding

The team believes that the level of state general funds available to support the educational enterprise is low; the resulting lag in faculty salaries is especially alarming (Self-Study, p. 12).

State tax support has declined as a percent of unrestricted revenues from 34 percent in 1989 to 27 percent in 1999. At the time of the last evaluation in 1989, although the university was suffering from declining state support, declining state appropriations could be offset by increased tuition; ten years later the situation is much more acute. With the adoption in 1992 of the Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR), tuition increases are strictly limited.

The campus has adopted a five-year rolling general fund budget as a means of maximizing the deployment of limited funds toward strategic objectives. However, the team notes that in every sector of the university's operations, the deprivation of adequate funding is beginning to place the institution under enormous stress. CU-Boulder is increasingly reliant upon the indirect cost recovery from grants to fund its basic operating costs, a factor which, if allowed to continue, may ultimately threaten to stifle future research growth because of the lack of funds for future start-ups or cost sharing on grants.

Significant internal reallocations have made some critical investments possible in some areas. The university is exploring the development of enterprise zones which may be allowed to operate outside the requirements of TABOR, or even declaring the entire university an enterprise zone. The only silver lining in this otherwise bleak picture is the fact that, as a result of TABOR, the state has accumulated large surpluses, resulting in some significant one-time capital fund appropriations to the university.
In almost every area of concern which follows in this report, the increasingly dire status of basic state support may be cited as an underlying cause. The team believes that the university has responded to these fiscal realities with creativity and imagination. However, for the short term, there appears to be no solution in sight for major areas of concern (the continued concern about lagging faculty salaries, for example, or the acute need to update the student information system.) The unintended consequence of TABOR is this: The people of Colorado are placing a great university – arguably one of the most significant engines of future economic well-being in the state – at risk.

B. Inadequate Facilities and Equipment

The team observes that present facilities and equipment are inadequate for fulfillment of the teaching and research mission in the years immediately ahead (Self-Study, p. 13).

Since the 1989 NCA visit, several new buildings have been built and there are plans for several more, as described in the 2000 Self-Study. There has been a significant increase – on the order of $4M – in annual state-supported expenditures for facilities maintenance.

The team concludes that this concern has been satisfactorily addressed. There has been substantial progress in marshaling resources to meet this challenge.

C. Goal Discrepancy in Self-Study

The team notes the discrepancy between the goals stated in the self-study regarding academic advising and the actual experience of many students, especially those in the college of Arts and Sciences (Self-Study, p. 14).

Over the past ten years, and particularly in the past two years, a serious commitment of financial and human resources has benefitted academic advising, particularly in the College of Arts and Sciences. The establishment of the Academic Advising Center, the appointment of a permanent Director of Advising at the Assistant Dean level, and the hiring and training of several professional advisers have collectively enhanced the availability and quality of academic advising in the College of Arts and Sciences. While not quite at the 400:1 student-adviser ratio, the Advising Center is fast approaching that goal; there is at least one full-time professional adviser in most departments, and at least a part-time professional adviser in the smallest departments. Progress is being made on a consistent basis toward meeting their goals for advising.

One hallmark of this commitment to advising is the development of faculty preceptors who enrich the advising experiences of students in their majors in a variety of ways. Open options students are now assigned to an adviser in the Academic Advising Center so that they
can receive consistent attention. There are also pre-professional advisers available for students interested in law or health-related fields.

Communication with students is timely and effective. Currently, there is a problem with the infrastructure of student information services. Because the student information system degree audit component has not been kept up to date with curricular changes, graduate audits are performed manually to ensure accuracy. Similarly, many basic functions such as drop/adds and grade changes are done manually. This kind of work consumes advising time better spent on substantive, academic-based issues. Once the new software for student information services has been selected and implemented, this crunch of time should be alleviated.

In summary, the team notes there is still a slight disparity between the goals for academic advising and the current state of advising. At the same time, the team applauds the many achievements and serious commitment to improving academic advising. If financial resources are available for current plans to be implemented, students in the College of Arts and Sciences will benefit from an excellent program of academic advising.

D. Planning & Budgeting for Information Systems

The team believes that there is a lack of coordination in planning and budgeting for information systems (Self-Study, p. 16).

The campus information technology infrastructure at the University of Colorado has, for the last decade, been of high quality from a technology perspective, especially considering the resources the campus was investing.

The university instituted the Alliance for Technology, Learning and Society (ATLAS) program, a creative initiative to raise the profile of the IT arena specifically through the investigation of strategies for application of IT to basic academic functions. ATLAS has a large goal for external fundraising and has already enjoyed significant success on that front. In addition, the new certificate program for "Technology, Arts and Media" already appears to be attracting significant numbers of students.

The team found that planning and budgeting for information systems has significantly improved since the last evaluation visit.

E. Dialogue between Administration and Faculty

The team suggests that there needs to be greater dialogue between administration and faculty regarding the values of and procedures for implementation of the strategic plan (Self-Study, p. 17).
Faculty now serve on all important committees. The Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) is developing performance measures to determine which areas in the university should get extra resources for excellence. The BFA is also initiating third and fifth year in-depth reviews of senior administrators.

There is a genuine sense that the current Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs in collaboration with the BFA, with special credit to the current and past chair, are committed to including faculty input on all important issues being discussed on campus. To the extent that committee appointments for faculty, as well as participation in major searches and senior administrative reviews have not been formally codified in the policies and procedures of the university, formal action should be taken to consolidate what appear to be excellent gains in communication, collaboration, and shared governance among faculty and administrators.

F. Integration of Faculty Governance in Decision Making

The team suggests that the administration find avenues through which to involve the faculty governance structure more extensively in the decision-making process (Self-Study, p. 17).

Significant progress has been made in addressing the prior committee’s suggestions about greater involvement of faculty governance representatives in central administrative decision making. The Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs have demonstrated a genuine commitment to obtaining faculty input. They and others in the administrative leadership have turned repeatedly to the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) for suggestions about faculty representation on task forces and policy making committees. In turn, the leadership of the BFA is engaged in vigorous efforts at outreach to the faculty, encouraging wider participation and reassuring the faculty that their voices will be listened to by the central administration.

The team concludes that the efforts both on the part of the central administration and the BFA leadership seem to be working to ensure a change in the culture of shared faculty governance.

G. Centralized Advising Resource Center

The team suggests that the university proceed with caution toward implementation of the centralized advising resource center until further dialogue at all levels of the institution is achieved (Self-Study, p. 17).

The university has made considerable progress in addressing the undergraduate advising deficiencies identified in the 1989 NCA Accreditation Report. The advising of Arts and Sciences students, particularly those without a declared major, had been the primary area of concern in 1989. Although slow in addressing this problem, the College of Arts and Sciences
established a task force in 1996 that studied the issue and released an action report in June of 1997. The goals and objectives of that plan are very clear and are appropriately corrective of the identified shortcomings in advising. (See Section II-C above).

While considerable progress has been made in Arts and Sciences student advising, there is room for further improvement. Computer-based degree requirements audits have been available to students in many academic programs for some time, but they have become outdated and inaccurate. Colleges and departments are beginning to deny students access to their degree audit programs because they currently give students erroneous information. The availability of accurate degree audit programs for direct student use reduces demand for professional academic advising, and inaccurate programs lead to scheduling errors and student confusion that creates demand for professional advising. In Section VI-B at the end of this report, the team makes some suggestions for further improvement.

H. Graduate Student Employee Workloads

The team suggests that attention be given to resolving the disparity in relative workloads among graduate student employees (Self-Study, p. 17).

In response to concerns raised in the last review about graduate student employee workloads, the graduate school developed appropriate and clear policies on workload expectations related to the percentage of student appointments. The graduate school focused on addressing student complaints occurring at that time, and, in addition, the graduate school recently surveyed students to detect any student concerns and did not receive any complaints.

The team feels that the issue of graduate student workloads has been appropriately addressed by the university. The team recommends that these policies be published in the Graduate Student Handbook and on university Web sites.

I. Undergraduate Leadership and Management Opportunities

The team urges the university to continue to nurture leadership and management opportunities for undergraduate students as reflected in the present student government arrangements (Self-Study, p. 18).

Many such opportunities are available today for undergraduates in the approximately 200 campus-based organizations that exist, including the University of Colorado Student Union (UCSU) which manages a $24 million annual budget.
Also, students have the option of starting a new organization if existing groups do not meet their needs.

The team concludes that this concern has been adequately addressed.

J. Disincentives for Enrolling Foreign Graduate Students

The team notes that financial disincentives prevent departments from enrolling highly qualified foreign graduate students, and suggests that the university urge the state to address this matter (Self-Study, p. 18).

The enrollment of international students is very low in view of the Research I status of the University of Colorado. This still presents a challenge to the university, because:

1. Foreign students do not qualify for in-state status and must therefore demonstrate a minimum of $30,000 of annual financial support to qualify for enrollment and sustain their enrollment throughout their tenure at the university.
2. The university is located in the “geographic” center of the continental United States.
3. Many departments and programs within the university have no active recruitment programs for international students.

The team still sees a small number of international students, along with very low enrollments of African Americans, both contributing to a noticeable lack of racial and ethnic diversity on this campus. Diversity planning remains a major challenge to the university and is discussed in detail in Section VI of this report.

III. General Institutional Requirements

The university responses to the general institutional requirements are detailed in the April 2000 Self-Study report on pages 141-149.

A. Mission

The university has a mission statement that is part of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S. 23-30-101a). The mission statement is referred to in the 1996 Strategic Plan, the University of Colorado at Boulder Catalog, and a number of the college and school Self-Study documents.

B. Authorization

The University of Colorado was formally established by the state constitution in 1876. The University of Colorado at Boulder was authorized by action of the state legislature, as
amended, November 7, 1972. Identification of the University of Colorado at Boulder as a "comprehensive graduate research university" is contained in the Colorado Revised Statues.

C. Governance

The University of Colorado-Boulder meets all of the general institutional requirements with respect to governance, as specified in the Colorado Constitution, the Laws of the Regents, and Minutes of the Board of Regents. As such, the Board of Regents possesses and exercises necessary governance powers, maintains public accountability and administrative autonomy, internal executive leadership, and appropriate endorsement of affiliation with the commission.

D. Faculty

The University of Colorado at Boulder employs faculty with appropriate qualifications to offer instruction in their programs, and a sufficient number of these faculty are employed full time by the institution for this purpose (See the Basic Institutional Data Form C). In turn, this faculty is fully involved in the design and implementation of the institution's educational programs (see the University of Colorado Faculty Handbook).

E. Educational Program

The University of Colorado operates under the statues of the state of Colorado and the Laws of the University Board of Regents. These documents require and allow the university to confer degrees. The institution offers and confers degrees and its degree programs are fully compatible with its educational mission and appropriately named (See University of Colorado at Boulder Catalog; Colorado Commission on Higher Education and CU-Boulder Approved Degree Programs). The university currently has 151 approved degree programs: 61 bachelor's, 47 master's, and 43 doctoral, and grants degrees in all of these areas regularly. Students are enrolled in all of the programs offered, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional areas. The programs and degrees have names appropriate to their content and are based on recognized fields of study.

A set of General Educational Requirements (Core Curriculum) is currently in place and recognized by most of the colleges and schools. A study is underway to change the core curriculum to include smaller writing classes and a capstone course in critical thinking skills. The suggested reform is designed to gain support from all divisions and also to make transfer from other institutions easier.
Admission policies and practices are consistent with the institution’s mission and programs. Admission at the freshman level is complicated by a complex set of rules, imposed by the Colorado legislature and implemented by the Colorado Commission for Higher Education (CCHE), which govern in-state/out-of-state ratios and other factors.

The university provides space for classrooms and research facilities. Additionally, library and computer resources are comprehensive and easily accessible to all students. The university has off-campus resources appropriate to degree programs requiring them.

F. Finances

The University of Colorado is audited annually by the State Auditor. The most recent audit covers the last completed fiscal year, June 30, 1999. These reports indicate the university is in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles with no exceptions. Additionally, the university is in compliance with appropriate federal financial requirements. Its certified financial reports indicate a consistent pattern of allocations which are publicly disseminated. The university is operating in a fiscally sound fashion, with appropriate polices, procedures and controls. The university has in place appropriate budgeting, accounting, cash flow, and debt reserves. Within the financial constraints of the state it is managing its financial affairs wisely. It is in compliance with the fiscal rules and regulations of the state of Colorado.

G. Public Information

The university’s catalog includes its mission statement along with accurate descriptions of its: a) educational programs and degree requirements, b) learning resources, c) admissions policies and practices, d) policies and procedures directly affecting students, e) charges and refund policies, and f) the academic credentials of its faculty and administrators.

The University of Colorado Boulder’s catalog discloses its standing with the accrediting bodies with which it is affiliated (Catalog, pp. 6, 40, 273, 299, 311, 391, 401, and 417).

The University of Colorado Board of Regents adopted a resolution on April 20, 2000, “Resolved that the Regents authorize the University of Colorado at Boulder’s affiliation with the commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Further Resolved that the Regents endorse and support the accreditation process the University of Colorado at Boulder is undertaking in order to become reaccredited by the North Central Association.”
The Self-Study report also lists accreditation at the departmental level for the departments of chemistry, psychology, and speech, language, and hearing sciences. University representatives were able to produce documents validating these affiliations. However, these affiliations were not published in the catalog or any other documents produced for the purpose of public information.

According to the NCA Handbook on Accreditation, federal requirements also stipulate that disclosures of accreditation should include the addresses and telephone numbers of all accrediting associations. There is no doubt that the university would readily make such information available to anyone who inquired. However, it does not appear in the catalog or in other materials produced by institutional representatives.

The team finds that the University of Colorado at Boulder meets all of the General Institutional Requirements of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

IV. Criteria for Accreditation

A. Criterion One

The institution has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher education.

The institutional mission statement for the University of Colorado at Boulder is clear, and it is widely promulgated to the university’s various constituencies. The mission statement is prominently featured in appropriate university documents. Its purposes and priorities are described and elaborated in the campus planning documents and the Self-Study.

Most of the colleges and schools have specific statements of mission, which are related to the university mission statement. An example is the Arts and Sciences Self-Study document, which could serve as a good model for others.

The University of Colorado at Boulder clearly meets this criterion. It would promote institutional alignment if each college and school cited the university mission, stated the four goals of the Boulder campus, and provided an explanation of how the unit and university mission statement and goals are in alignment in the individual college and school documents.
B. Criterion Two

The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

1. Administrative (Re)organization

It must be stressed that the current administrative organization on the Boulder campus works extremely well and gets high marks from faculty, deans, and directors. However, there is genuine concern that the present incumbents are the key to that success, and that the current division of responsibilities has evolved in part due to the personalities of the incumbents. The Chancellor should consider whether or not a change in administrative organization would assure the university of continuing effective leadership, when the current management team is no longer in place. Specific recommendations for administrative reorganization are listed in Section VI.

2. Faculty Governance

As discussed in Section II-E above, an effective model of shared faculty governance is relatively recent on the Boulder campus, and it seems to be working very well in part due to the enhanced efforts by the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Chair of the BFA, to establish a "teamwork approach."

Maintaining and even enhancing a culture of faculty participation in advisory capacities should be a significant goal at all levels of administration on campus, especially in light of the major budgetary challenges that could create a divisive atmosphere of competition for resources. In a similar vein, there have been renewed efforts to increase participation in councils and executive committees in the schools and colleges, especially in the College of Arts and Sciences, and this approach may well turn out to be crucial to morale in a time of considerable fiscal constraint. The campus, and its constituent units, has very high aspirations and ambitious plans. Whereas it seems to be functioning amazingly well in this context, these ambitions and plans could tax the goodwill of the faculty if individual needs are not met and consensus built around the wisdom of new initiatives. As such, there is ever more reason to continue to focus on faculty involvement as a way of enhancing loyalty and commitment to units and to the campus more broadly.
3. Student Governance

Student leaders on the campus were appropriately involved in the NCA Self-Study process, and in the preparation of the Self-Study report. In general, student government seems to be functioning well on the Boulder campus, with very competent leaders who interact regularly with the campus administration and the Board of Regents. One student leader reported that “by tradition” CU-Boulder students have a negative attitude toward the administration, but that those who have the opportunity to work with the administration usually become positive in this regard. To the extent that this is an accurate reflection, it would be wise to develop additional ways for students to interact with administrators.

The CU-Boulder campus accords student government more control over student services than almost any other campus in the country. This works to the advantage of the campus, as there appears to be a real sense of shared governance among student leaders. The significant amount of control that students have over the assessment and expenditure of student fees, through referendum voting and shared management authority, generates an active and involved student body. As evidence of engagement in student government, it is very impressive that in the recent student election there was 30 percent voter turnout.

Concerns expressed by student leaders included: frustration with the Board of Regents for not establishing numeric goals for the campus’ affirmative action plan, insufficient residence hall space, high rents for off-campus housing, off-campus safety, and the high level of non-resident tuition. Students reported a sense that many of the “town people” seem to have bad feelings toward them. It was reported that student opinion regarding specific services and the overall campus environment is high, but that only seniors are surveyed. Students would like to see the entire student body surveyed on a periodic basis, so that new students, graduate students and other subgroups of the student population could be studied.

4. Staff Governance

The Boulder campus has a tradition of staff governance dating back to the early 1970’s. The Staff Council is an active and important feature of campus life and also serves as an important conduit to the University Staff Council. On campus, the Staff Council meets
regularly, and has an active internal committee structure. The legislative committee serves a vital role of relaying to the classified staff on campus ongoing developments at the state level. This is very important in light of the rather extensive regulations emanating from the state. On campus, the Council has recently been given more of a voice in administrative decision making via representation on the Chancellor’s Executive Committee and on various search committees for deans and other senior leadership positions.

The staff is a very loyal and critical part of the campus community: they appear to be quite identified with the Total Learning Environment Initiative and are certainly pivotal to its success, often serving as frontline support for students. At the university level, the University Staff Council provides an opportunity to speak to the Regents, and the Council conducts a very useful survey of staff every five years.

The Boulder Council is looking for ways to use that input more effectively and to more regularly survey campus staff. Strides have been made of late in mentoring and staff development opportunities, although it would be helpful if more units supported and recognized the participation of staff in the Council activities. Those who are active in the Council typically do so on an overload basis, with the resulting pressures to opt out in favor of unit-level tasks. Since participation can be important in building staff morale on campus, supervisors should be encouraged to support this activity, and the senior campus leadership may want to consider holding more recognition celebratory events.

5. Support for Student Development

There is clear evidence that student development is a primary concern of the faculty and administration on the Boulder campus. The Total Learning Environment Initiative provides a set of comprehensive goals that can serve to unite all elements of the campus in efforts to improve student learning and overall student development. The Division of Student Affairs has a student development model that guides the formation and operation of programs. The Student Odyssey Project promises to modernize and streamline the delivery of student services by re-engineering operations from a "student as customer" viewpoint. A proposed Honor Code communicates the behavioral expectations of CU-Boulder students, and provides a sound basis for dealing with those who violate the code. The Residential Academic Programs have proven to be effective,
and there is an expressed intent to continue to expand the number of offerings on the campus. A freshman seminar course, University 101, has been developed, and there is a commitment to expand the number of course offerings.

One of the primary concerns at CU-Boulder is the shortage of on-campus housing, and the Division of Student Affairs should move quickly to address this issue. More on-campus housing would help resolve some of the safety concerns that students have, would help reduce the cost of attendance for many students, and would provide new opportunities for the development of Residential Academic Programs.

Capitalizing on the Total Learning Environment Initiative, the Division of Student Affairs should partner with Academic Affairs to develop new and/or expanded programs that strengthen student learning outside of the classroom and facilitate overall student development. The University 101 course and the Residential Academic Programs illustrate areas in which the Student Affairs and Academic Affairs leaders could work productively to expand programs and enhance the total academic experience of students.

6. Faculty and Academic Staff

The success of any university depends primarily on the faculty, and as mentioned throughout this report, at Colorado the faculty is outstanding. The University of Colorado has an excellent and dedicated faculty, which should be particularly commended for their dedication to the “Total Learning Environment” for upgrading undergraduate education. As at virtually all Research I Universities, the balance between the demands of teaching and research is a source of continuing concern among faculty.

It follows that, if the strength of the university is its faculty, then the principal challenge is to retain and improve the faculty. This challenge has begun to emerge at Colorado, and it is likely that, if new resources are not immediately organized, the university will find its quality increasingly eroded due to the emigration of productive faculty. It is possible that the “brain drain” has commenced; during the 1999 calendar year, the campus experienced a resignation rate of 3.35 percent (33 out of 988 tenure stream positions). This represented a sharp increase over the 2 percent annual average over the previous five years.
Because there is a great scarcity of new resources, there is enormous dependence on extramural grants to drive the entire university. The indirect cost returns from the grants to the research units are the only significant discretionary resources available for many needs. In the short term, the university may be able to weather the various problems that arise during the year. This ability to handle the issues may suffice as long as the faculty continues to compete successfully for grants. However, recent history informs us to expect fluctuations in federal funding for basic research, and if only a few large grants go unfunded, the university will find itself in immediate trouble. Of course, since indirect costs are a return to the university of its research investment costs, the practice of using such funds to invest in other areas cannot be a successful long-term strategy.

Even with the current strong extramural funding to the university, several problems are emerging. For example:

a) CU-Boulder has a number of long-standing renown research institutes which generate a large portion (over 50%) of the research income for the campus. Yet, a growing concern revolves around salary inequities for faculty serving in institutes, an issue which really needs to be addressed to maintain the substantial research and educational activities contributions provided by these institutes.

b) There is a growing challenge in putting together competitive start-up packages for new faculty. We note that, in the life sciences a start-up package for a new assistant professor is now on the order of $350K at competing institutions.

c) There is little money for cost-sharing for major pieces of research and teaching equipment.

d) There is a growing challenge in funding adequate raises for faculty. This is especially acute when the academic unit attempts to match a competing institution who is trying to hire away a promising faculty member. The current budget provides for a campuswide “one percent over cost-of-living” annual salary raise for faculty. However, this salary increase is not realized by the majority of the faculty. In order to deal with retention issues, the university must retain resources from the raise pool. In addition, the academic units also must set aside a pot of money to deal with retention issues. Thus, the actual raise that trickles down to the rank and file faculty
is significantly LESS than the cost-of-living increase. This scheme may work for a short time, but it spells disaster in the not-so-long term. Under the present situation, the way to obtain a significant raise is to go out and get a job offer somewhere else, a situation that portends the eventual collapse of the quality of the university. Further, there are no built-in raises that accompany faculty promotions, again placing the university at a disadvantage when comparing its practices to other institutions.

In summary, the team strongly advises the university to develop significant central resources from new sources to sustain the high quality of the faculty. It is fair to say that, if the university is unable to develop new resources, it will find itself as an increasingly easy target for "faculty raiding" by other institutions.

7. Classified Staff

The Boulder Campus Staff Council represents approximately 2700 classified and professional-exempt staff. It has a representative governance structure and makes recommendations and meets regularly with the administration to address issues of interest and concern to staff employees. Staff members participate in the University of Colorado Staff Council at the system level, composed of representatives of the four campuses. They have the opportunity to address the Board of Regents. Staff members are subject to the state of Colorado’s personnel system and participate in statewide liaison organizations to facilitate providing information to the Colorado General Assembly.

The morale and attitude of the staff are high. They are generally dedicated and committed to the university. They feel they are respected by the faculty and have good working relationships. The pay structure and job classification systems are established by the state. Generally the staff are working effectively and have competitive salaries and benefits. The state is in the process of developing a pay-for-performance system; the implementation procedures of this plan have not been developed, and this is a concern. However, there is an effort underway to legislatively modify this process which may resolve some of the concerns. The current economy and competitive job market create a challenge for maintaining competitive pay for long-term employees. The university may want to work with the State Personnel System to be sure they are able to keep qualified long-term employees and maintain competitive salaries for long-term staff.
Playing an increasingly important role are the professional-exempt staff, currently about 400 individuals. The state job classification system does not always respond to the duties, responsibilities and needs of jobs in the university. The opportunity to continue to create and utilize personnel in these positions should be encouraged.

The university is currently implementing new software systems. Staff members feel they have the opportunity to participate in the implementation and receive adequate training. The university permits staff members to take six hours per year of credit courses at no cost as part of their professional development opportunities – a valuable benefit that encourages retention of qualified staff.

Within the policies of the state personnel system and financial resources, the university is reasonably staffed with support personnel. It has a highly qualified and dedicated staff. It is effectively organized and utilizes support personnel to accomplish its mission. The development of more staff employee recognition systems for exemplary performance should be considered. Programs of this type are not expensive and would have a positive impact on morale. It also would provide an opportunity for the Campus Staff Council to assume increased responsibilities and be more engaged in serving the university.

8. Physical and Environmental Resources

Some of the concerns in this area were noted in Section II-B above. The team identified three strengths: a) There has been substantial improvement in resource allocation for additions to the physical plant and for maintenance; b) The facilities planning staff appears to be very responsive and committed to the mission of the university; and c) The university has done a remarkably good job in this category with the limited resources available. This topic is discussed further in Section VI-C below.

9. Research Equipment

Cost-sharing for new equipment ventures is typically distributed according to the following formula: 50 percent from the graduate school, 25 percent from the college, and 25 percent from the department. The amount of resources held by the graduate school for this purpose – said to be $1.4M – appears to be at an unrealistically low level to significantly enhance the research infrastructure.
10. Research Administration

The staff of the Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG) is impressive. There is evidence that the OCG is extremely loyal and highly tuned to the needs of the investigators. The very low turnover rate within the staff of the OCG suggests that this is an excellent operation with clearly defined objectives. It would be helpful for the OCG to develop meaningful assessment instruments, including surveying the faculty and external peer reviews.

11. Technology Transfer

At present, the income from technology transfer is modest, but this area is recognized as having enormous potential in the near future. The current organization delivers 25 percent of the royalty revenues systemwide rather than directly to the campus central administration. It is likely that the university will need to carefully re-evaluate the way institutional royalties are distributed. There is evidence that the current efforts on campus, while laudable, could be much more, and this would require increased funding for the Technology Transfer staff. In addition, the return of a fraction of the royalties to the campus central administration—e.g., to the Graduate School—could represent a meaningful source of revenue that could be applied to important problems, including cost-sharing, start-up packages, and faculty salaries.

12. Financial Resources

a) State Budget Process

The University of Colorado at Boulder is a public university, subject to the university system and state budgeting process. The university clearly understands these procedures and is effectively working to operate within externally imposed constraints. Colorado adopted a Taxpayers Bill of Rights Amendment in 1992, which limits the rate of growth of state funding. Currently tuition and fees constitute 60 percent of the general fund support. This with indirect cost recoveries constitutes the largest component of university general funding. The university anticipates only modest growth of state support in the future. They are dependent upon non-resident students to pay a significant portion of tuition support while having to maintain at least 67 percent resident enrollment. This presents a challenge to maintain an effective resource base for the future. The university understands these financial constraints and is effectively developing proposals for tuition reform, increased auxiliary funding, growth in private
fundraising and increased private, state and federal research programs. These initiatives need to continue to provide a sound financial base for the university.

The university is also subject to the regulatory oversight of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. The campus is challenged with maintaining an effective working relationship with the CCHE. As reported earlier, challenges facing the campus include continuing to operate with the constraints of TABOR, the need to develop faculty start-up funding, maintaining competitive salaries for both faculty and staff, and committing senior leadership to more external fund raising initiatives.

b) Local Budget Process

The university has developed an effective campus budgeting process. As a result of some of the constraints outlined above, they have moved from a year-to-year format to a five-year rolling general fund budget. This process is updated annually and reflects the changes in revenues. It is integrated with their strategic planning process. They have increased faculty involvement and are developing performance-based processes for assessment. As part of a four-campus system, negotiations and working with the system staff appear to be effective. The campus has begun these processes earlier in the year to improve timeliness. The campus has developed a process to review the overall fiscal health of various units and is developing procedures to provide seed capital for new initiatives. Incentives are being developed to encourage units to seek additional and alternative funding sources through gain sharing when additional resources are obtained.

The campus has recently implemented a Vice Chancellor for Budget and Finance position to work on improved planning, management and campuswide understanding of the university’s overall financial circumstances. Faculty and staff groups seem to have an understanding of the financial constraints imposed by TABOR and the need to identify and generate alternative resources. The campus has developed an inclusive planning process and is committed to long-range planning.

The campus has developed an effective capital planning process. It has received state support for several recent facility initiatives. There have been some problems with the state approval procedures where campus priorities have been modified. These do not appear to
impose major capital difficulties but will require increased private fundraising to meet matching requirements. The Chancellor and deans appear to be committed to this process. The university needs to review the relationship with the universitywide foundation effort to be sure that it is maximizing its opportunity for private fundraising. Multi-funding revenue streams will make this more important in the future if the university is to have adequate financial resources.

13. Libraries and Distance Learning

In an effort to elevate salary levels for the faculty despite low subsidies from the state of Colorado, a decision has been made to severely reduce funds for the operation of the library, thus reducing salary increases for staff within the library system and decreasing dramatically the acquisitions budget. During the past few years, the budget has been increased at a rate of approximately 2 percent annually. Since the total holdings of the library are at approximately the median for Research I Universities, the long-term impact of this decision could be serious. In particular, the reductions in periodicals necessary for faculty to remain informed of recent research could have an impact on both the quality and currency of research among the resident faculty.

In the area of distance learning, we found that CU-Boulder, especially in the engineering area, has an active and cost-effective program of outreach. Much of this is based on fairly simple video transmission of live lectures or video tapes into business sites near Boulder, but there is also a portfolio of paper correspondence courses and an emerging set based on internet technologies. CU-Boulder seems to have a successful model, and it has thought carefully about what kinds of courses and technologies make sense for it. It is neither leaping into risky endeavors nor paralyzed with indecision and fear, both of which are common among other institutions.

The Libraries and the central IT organization seem to be committed to a collaborative and cooperative model of working together rather than competing. The humanities especially seem to be concerned about the balance between resources devoted to creating digital collections versus traditional materials. This balancing act is especially difficult because of the very low level of available funding to cover all acquisitions.
14. Administrative Services

Since 1995, the Boulder campus has participated in the Administrative Streamlining Project (ASP). The ASP was intended to consolidate physical administrative services for the four campuses and upgrade and integrate information technology services. In retrospect, physically moving staff around and trying to implement new computing systems was a mistake. The implementation of PeopleSoft procurement, accounts payable, general ledger and human resources modules has not gone well. Procurement is now up on version 6.0, human resources will come up on 7.0 in July 2000, and all financials will be on 7.0 by autumn, 2000. Faculty accept implementation of this project, but they have no evidence yet that progress is being made.

Despite CU-Boulder having to learn hard lessons, we believe the decision to upgrade administrative computing systems was correct and, as many universities have done, CU-Boulder chose the available PeopleSoft product. The decisions to bring up human resources with a delay and to defer implementing the PeopleSoft SIS package were the right decisions to make. The university is developing its own front-end product to improve reporting tools and ease end-user frustrations.

C. Criterion Three

The institution is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

1. College of Arts and Sciences

With responsibility for more than 70 percent of the student body, the College of Arts and Sciences is central to the university's mission. The College houses 36 departments, and 50 academic programs and centers, offering 59 majors, 48 bachelor's degrees, 33 master's degrees, and 29 doctoral degrees. It is the academic home of 14,000+ undergraduates and 2000+ graduates. College faculty and students maintain the qualities of excellence reported in the previous NCA report.

Since the last NCA visit, dramatic changes have occurred in the College of Arts and Sciences in terms of leadership, facilities, the core curriculum, and academic advising. All of these changes have significantly and positively influenced the educational climate of the College for both faculty and students. Moreover, these positive developments have occurred within a context of fiscal constraints that required considerable reallocation of resources, salary
compression, and increased demands on faculty time. The team was impressed with the scope of development and the high morale and productivity of faculty and students despite the fragile equilibrium between growing needs and available resources.

The College has democratized leadership to increase faculty participation in the leadership of the College. Chairs are now elected on a rotating basis for a three-year term, retaining as much as possible of their teaching and research agendas, and involving the faculty of their respective departments as much as possible in decision making through consensus building. Chairs and directors meet with the dean bi-weekly, ensuring ongoing and timely discussion of common concerns and issues. With financial constraints and the necessity to reallocate resources to meet changing circumstances, an ad hoc “Reinvestment Committee” has been created to review resource requests for department and academic enterprises and to advise College administrators about searches for new faculty. An algorithmic approach to resource allocation has been developed and is perceived, by faculty interviewed by the team, as being consistent and fair.

Also noted in the previous NCA report was a serious need for new facilities. In the ensuing decade, there have been many developments in this area, including:

a) A new $16 million, 59,000 square foot humanities building has just recently opened on the Norlin Quadrangle.

b) In 1997, the $14.5 million Benson Earth Sciences Building was dedicated.

c) In 1992, the campus completed construction of a new mathematics building.

d) In addition, renovation of Woodbury Hall and the Hule Science Building was completed.

While these additions and renovations are impressive and add significantly to the ability of the College of Arts and Sciences to meet its educational function, these facilities are just keeping pace with current needs. The projected expansion of the student body means that, within a few short years, more space will be required. A strategic planning process has been instituted that involves all departments in developing a five-year plan that will, in part, address how the college will meet this challenge.
Student learning is monitored effectively through the CCHE-mandated system of outcomes assessment and program review. While there are many projects and developments in each of the departments and centers, two major endeavors will have significant impact on the overall academic enterprise of the College of Arts and Sciences: the revision of the core and the establishment of the Academic Advising Center.

In February 2000, the Arts and Sciences Core Curriculum Task Force presented the faculty with the “CS & D (Core Skills and Distribution) Plan.” Upon approval, the plan will be implemented with incoming first-year students in the 2001-02 academic year. Rather than the primarily cafeteria-style of the previous core curriculum, the CS &D Plan has core skills requirements of writing, mathematics and quantitative reasoning, and foreign language for the first year: an equal balance of ways of knowing in the arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, enriched with optional opportunities for interdisciplinary modes of inquiry and a required course on diversity; and a senior experience to draw it all together. Administratively, particularly in terms of advising, the new plan is simpler, cleaner, and more streamlined. From an educational perspective, it shifts from a list of core courses to a general education approach focusing on ways of knowing. Finally, from a foundational perspective, it focuses on students’ core skills in their first year.

One skill area in particular that has been strengthened in the curriculum is writing. While much has yet to be worked out, and a Director of Writing has yet to be hired, several decisions have been made, the most significant of which is that every entering student will have to complete both the lower-level and upper-level writing requirement. This change alone will require reallocation of resources, as well as some new financial resources for administrative, faculty, and instructor positions. Those responsible for designing the course represent a broad array of disciplines in all three divisions: arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. This committee faces both a daunting and exciting intellectual task as it designs the course to develop the writing skills of all incoming students.

The Academic Advising Center, under the leadership of the new Director of Advising and Assistant Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, has significantly improved the quality of advising for its students. With a cohort of 60 people, including staff, reception, administrators,
and advisers, students are notified earlier about their advisers (by e-mail in July and by letter in August). receive more advising information during orientation, and are assigned a faculty preceptor in the department of their chosen major.

The long-standing commitment of faculty to excellence in teaching and research remains strong throughout the school. The new core curriculum is positioned to contribute significantly to the academic enterprise of the college, and this overall academic enterprise is increasingly well-supported by academic advising and new and renovated facilities. At the same time, this equilibrium among resources, facilities, and academic excellence is fragile. With the projected increase in student enrollment, more resources, more faculty, and more facilities will be essential.

2. College of Business and Administration

Through its missions of teaching, research, and service, the College of Business and Administration is effectively supporting the overall mission of the university. It has a long-term vision to be competitive with the best business schools in public research universities in the nation. It offers undergraduate, M.B.A. and Ph.D. programs that are accredited by the appropriate professional organization, most recently in 1996. Although faced with some resource and space problems, the college is effectively addressing all of the issues for improvement. It has received state support for a new building, which will alleviate its space problems. It is effectively integrating technology in its programs, increasing scholarship support, and enhancing its working relationships with business and industry. It has an advisory council and appears to be making contributions to effectively serve its students and the business and industry of the state.

The college has a strategic plan and is effectively developing both internal and external assessments. Based upon a strategic plan adopted in 1996, it is making steady progress. Surveys are done annually of recruiters and employers, undergraduate students, alumni, and graduating students. The college has perceived strengths in computer proficiency, teamwork and problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills. The college is developing programs to improve international business programs, entrepreneurship, and diversity. Recently the college has been able to make several new faculty hires of women and underrepresented minority groups.

Through the expansion of its Executive Education programs and opportunity to work with business and industry in a growing metropolitan area, along with the opportunity for a new
building. the college should continue to be an important and successful program within the university.

3. School of Education

The stated mission of the School of Education (SOE) is: a) to conduct research to positively influence educational policy and practice, b) to provide high quality teacher education programs based on research and good practice, and c) to develop and maintain viable public school partnerships that help teachers and administrators work smarter to integrate research on effective classroom teaching. The SOE does not offer an undergraduate degree in education, although about 40 percent of the students enrolled in education courses are undergraduates seeking teaching certification.

In 1999, the SOE underwent a review by the Colorado Department of Education and the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education that resulted in full accreditation. Its graduate programs have been ranked among the top 30 by U.S. News & World Report each of the last five years. Faculty members are especially productive researchers, garnering substantial amounts of outside funding consistent with the campus’ research mission.

The SOE uses the results of a state mandated assessment program for all teacher licensure candidates to assess student learning. It also uses multiple measures to monitor the quality of programs, instruction, and advising. It has appointed its own full-time professional staff academic adviser in response to student feedback indicating the need for such a person.

The School has successfully diversified its faculty. It continues to be challenged in terms of attracting increasing numbers of diverse students to its programs.

Recently passed Colorado House Bill 154 requires that the school modify its teacher education certificate program so that all undergraduate students are able to complete their studies in four years with a minimum of 120 credit hours. This has placed unusually difficult constraints on a lean, productive unit, requiring it to divert substantial amounts of energy and attention on the part of school administrators and faculty members from efforts to enhance the quality of the school’s teaching, research, and service endeavors in order to reorganize the curriculum to meet these new requirements.
4. College of Engineering & Applied Science

With an enrollment of 2566 undergraduates, 1100 graduate students, and research funds in excess of $30 million per year for each of the past five years, the college is a significant unit within the university. The college has gained national attention in both education and research. Initiatives in educational reform include the Discovery Learning Initiative and the Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory. According to AAU and NRC reports, the college is among the top 10 public institutions in the nation in research dollars per faculty member. These factors confirm the commitment of the college to both undergraduate education and a world class research program.

The college has 11 B.S. programs, eight M.S. programs, and six degrees at the Ph.D. level. All of the traditional programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology. An additional five off-campus M.S. programs are offered, along with course offerings in another three engineering areas. Several degree offerings are in cross-disciplinary areas such as telecommunications and engineering management.

The student services offered by the college are comprehensive including special advising and tutoring for first-year, women, and minority students. Some of the same programs provide support for minority groups throughout the undergraduate years. These programs are designed to assist in recruiting efforts, improve retention rates, and generally support the success of the undergraduate students.

A self-imposed fee of $18 per student per class supports an Undergraduate Engineering Excellence Fund. This fund is used to fund academic development activities such as the Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory. This activity is a hands-on, design-based learning experience involving both faculty and first-year students. Impressive space and equipment have been provided to this program, and it attracts more than 70 percent of the entering engineering freshmen. Another high profile program, the Discovery Learning Initiative, encourages student involvement in research at an early stage. It then ends with capstone experiences in both design and research.
Graduate students benefit from the extensive research programs of the college. Graduate assistant instructors receive training in instruction and are subject to ongoing assessment both by faculty and students. Technology is used widely for both communication and learning.

For the most part, traditional methods of student assessment are used, with the exception of the national Fundamentals of Engineering examination for senior students. Faculty are assessed annually via course questionnaires, class visitations by colleagues, and a statement by the faculty members concerning their contributions to the department or college. Faculty are given the opportunity for participation in the university's Faculty Teaching Excellence Program to improve their teaching methods and materials, and are also given several other professional development opportunities. Outside and professional service activities are monitored and are considered an essential part of faculty contributions.

The college has an action plan for future development, realistically coupled to the budget process. Their largest challenges are in the area of state funding, student retention, recruiting of graduate students, and funding their instructional initiatives. They seek outside advice in all of these areas with the assistance of a College Advisory Committee and close associations with industry.

5. School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Since the last NCA review, several developments have influenced both the leadership and curricular offerings of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication (SJMC).

The School hired a new dean in early summer 2000. The interim dean responded effectively to the challenges he faced. These included inadequate facilities, a faculty in tension, and curricular poaching on their disciplinary terrain.

The 1998-99 visit by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications gave only provisional re-accreditation to SJMC, citing the above areas of challenge. The dean consequently resigned, and an interim dean was appointed to lead the school to full accreditation. Working closely with both the faculty and with the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, this interim dean has negotiated a move to the Armory, a spacious facility which is now undergoing renovations to make it an academically appropriate site for the needs of
the SJMC. Faculty, students, and administration seem to concur that this move will positively and significantly influence the ability of the school to meet its goals.

Working together to resolve the facilities problem has brought the faculty closer together on another area of growing conflict that was remarked upon during the Self-Study – the tension between the two missions: professional preparation and scholarly inquiry into theories of communication. Discussions about facilities led inevitably to discussions of curriculum, and faculty seemed to re-discover the connections between these two missions that had characterized an earlier, happier era in the department. Additionally, the interim dean has negotiated, with faculty input, six adjoint appointments in other colleges, centers, and programs. The School has thereby resolved, through interdisciplinary initiatives and cross-listing, many of the concerns that other academic units were teaching subjects in popular culture that SJMC faculty perceived as their purview.

This interdisciplinarity is a hallmark of SJMC, demonstrated most visibly in three new or proposed centers: a) The Center for Environmental Journalism, b) The Center for New Media, and c) The Center for Advertising Media.

Another new initiative since the last NCA visit is the establishment, in 1990, of the Office of Student Diversity and the Multi-Ethnic Media Organization (MEMO). While the effectiveness of these paired initiatives is differently perceived among faculty and students, figures do show a steady, if small, increase in the number of minority students in SJMC, both in the student body and in the faculty. While the state population figures indicate 19.7 percent minorities, and the CU-Boulder campus 11 percent minority representation, the SJMC reports 21 percent minority faculty. Moreover in a male-dominated academic arena (24 percent female faculty at CU-Boulder), SJMC has 32 percent female faculty as reported in the Self-Study.

The previous NCA report suggested quite strongly that SJMC should have a radio station in order to take advantage of its access to prime media markets (Denver is ranked 16th in country for radio markets). Two years ago, through a corporate merger, SJMC received a non-commercial radio station on the AM band as a gift. Staffed by students, managed by a full-time staff member, and funded almost entirely by subscription and in-kind contributions from the gifting corporation, the radio has been labeled “the best alternative radio station” in the area.
With a large student audience, and an increased radio presence in the curriculum, the station has achieved the goals articulated in the previous NCA report.

As mandated by the state, outcomes assessment forms the basis for evaluating student learning, curriculum, and planning. Internship evaluations and alumni surveys form the main basis of the SJMC outcomes assessment in their most recent report. As a result of their analysis of these modes of assessment, faculty conducted a series of in-depth workshops over a period of three years to evaluate how well SJMC was preparing its students for a field undergoing intense change. They agreed upon a new core that engages students early on with the role of new technologies in the news and advertising industries.

It is clear the SJMC has recaptured much of the equilibrium that characterized its strengths in the late 80's while also taking significant steps forward into the technological age. It must also be said, however, that it has achieved these remarkable accomplishments under interim leadership, in a short time, and with severe limits on resources. The school is eagerly awaiting the selection of a new dean to provide the leadership that will be necessary to negotiate these needed resources.

6. School of Law

Accredited by the American Bar Association and a member of the Association of American Law Schools, the CU-Boulder School of Law was last site visited in 1994-95 by a team jointly representing these two organizations. The school has addressed all recommendations made by the accreditation team. It generally ranks among the top 20 law schools in the nation in terms of Law School Admission Test scores and undergraduate grade point averages, and has an excellent record of recruiting and graduating students from racial minority populations. For the first time in the history of the school, the entering class had a female majority this year.

The greatest need of the School of Law is for a new building. The second greatest need of the Law School is an issue common to the rest of the campus – funding to improve faculty salaries and to reduce faculty attrition. Private support has enabled the dean to partially address this concern, but more state support is essential if the most valuable faculty members are to be retained.
7. College of Music

The College of Music is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music and is classified as a comprehensive school: that is, a music school offering a broad array of music degrees from baccalaureate through doctoral levels. The school enjoys an enviable reputation nationally with strong enrollments, a well-regarded faculty, and excellent facilities.

The dean of the school has developed an imaginative program for raising funds to recognize distinction within the faculty and has assembled a fine committee of supporters of music to assist him in securing funding for this project. Additional space is needed to properly house the extensive instrumental ensemble programs within the college and for the extensive and excellent holdings of the library.

The college enjoys an enviable reputation within the University of Colorado, and maintaining this status represents its principal challenge during the next decade.

8. Continuing Education and Summer Session

A reorganization of the Division of Continuing Education four years ago appears to be proving successful. Deans and campus administrators seem to support the work of the division and to consider it an integral part of the university's structure. Capable leadership and the securing of adequate quarters have been critical to this improvement. In contrast to many large public universities, the University of Colorado at Boulder seems to have resisted tendencies toward the decentralization of continuing education. This is probably one of the chief reasons for the division's current financial success. As a self-funding unit, the division not only pays its own way, but also provides an important revenue stream to the university. The division's earning power is becoming even more vital to the university in the face of TABOR and other constraints on appropriated funding.

Because of its emphasis on non-site specific distance education media, including independent study and videotaped engineering courses, the division is unusually well situated in the state. It appears not to have any problems of rivalry, or "turf," with either other public institutions or with private schools.

In its Self-Study, the division noted that its greatest problem is the lack of an external degree program that can allow distant students to rationalize their work in the pursuit of a
diploma or credentials. As the Self-Study notes, competition at the national and international levels in the field of distance education is becoming intense. And students studying at a distance are becoming increasingly motivated by degree prospects. Like continuing education units in other large universities with independent study programs, the division has concluded that an independent study program that can provide only transfer credit will inevitably lose its current enrollment base to more aggressive institutions. A decision to provide an external undergraduate degree will necessitate a drastic change in the College of Arts and Science limitation on independent study to 30 out of 120 total hours. Many proponents of distance education believe this long-entrenched – but decreasingly defensible – policy is limiting the potential of many independent study units, and that bodes ill for their futures.

At the time of the reorganization of Summer Session and the Division of Continuing Education, Summer Session enrollments were in decline, in keeping with national trends. The need for maximum tuition revenues and the fact that 90 percent of the summer students are in degree-seeking status demanded such an initiative. A Summer Session Task Force was created in the spring of 1999, and its report was issued in November 1999.

As matters now stand, while Summer Session enrollments have not grown, they have stabilized. More rational systems to aid in scheduling high-demand courses and in providing fair and attractive compensation to faculty are now in place and will be tested with the current year 2000 session. For the first time, Summer Session will offer "Maymester," a three-week intensive term, designed to attract students who do not normally enroll in summer classes. Maymester's impact on overall summer enrollments also will be tested in 2000.

From all appearances, Summer Session is on an upward curve, in terms of both revenues and academic stature. It has the potential to grow in enrollments and as a factor in carrying out the university's mission. As is the case with the Division of Continuing Education with which it is affiliated, it will be important for the university to allow Summer Session to retain sufficient funds to experiment, to continue to improve faculty compensation, and to deal with the vagaries of the nontraditional student population.
9. Baccalaureate Degree

The quality of the first-year student experience seems to be especially good due in large part to the successful efforts of CU-Boulder to "front load" or concentrate resources on first-year students. Some examples include the Residential Academic Programs (RAPS), FallFEST, the requirement that all freshman live on campus, the new Undergraduate Leadership Academy, and the availability of diverse academic theme halls, and so forth. The RAPS are particularly effective, but the additional $600 fee may discourage members of certain groups from participating.

By the time they graduate, almost two-thirds of CU-Boulder undergraduates have had one or more experiences with at least one academic initiative, such as service learning, study abroad, living in an academic theme unit, honors program, research opportunities with faculty members, and so forth. Indeed, the University of Colorado at Boulder is a national leader with regard to the proportion of its students who take advantage of study abroad opportunities.

The university has created a number of programs for high ability or highly motivated students to engage them in the first year of college. As is the case with many large universities, there is an abundance of programs for top students, while programs are lacking for the middle 30-40 percent of students.

Suggestions for improvement include:

a) More must be discovered about the character and quality of the student experience between the second year and the time students graduate, since it is during these years that a substantial number of students, especially students of color, leave the institution before graduating. Thus, it is essential that mechanisms be put in place to involve students more actively in the intellectual, social, and cultural life of the campus.

b) Vehicles are needed that bring together different groups on the campus to create a common vision of undergraduate learning and personal development and to facilitate strong, ongoing working relations. One suggestion is to bring together groups such as the Presidential Teaching Scholars and those involved in the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program with Student Affairs professionals to share ideas about how to implement Total Learning Environment goals and values.

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c) Consideration should also be given to establishing an early warning system made up of advisers, student life staff, and faculty members to identify students who are in academic or social difficulties.

d) The campus should examine and promote ways that the curriculum and academic program can be used intentionally to link students on a systematic basis to one another and to the campus, especially after the first year of study. Socialization to academic norms is not complete at the end of the first year of college, especially for first-generation college students and others who lack tacit knowledge about what is required to succeed at the university or whose goals and aspirations are not yet coherent and clear. Sophomore living groups off campus might be organized near the end of the first year through the RAPs and other programs, or the campus might consider sponsoring reunions for second and third year students who formerly lived together in residence halls.

Upper division students of color are said to congregate in Williams Village. To the extent this is accurate, the housing department along with academic affairs would do well to examine the nature of the student experience here and see if it can be replicated earlier in other housing units. The campus may also consider designating other living units as theme houses to attract more undergraduate students. Student affairs staff taking the lead with assistance from academic affairs, might work with local landlords to offer academic or cultural programs within off-campus housing units.

e) The campus might consider revamping new student recruitment and orientation activities to more clearly articulate to new students the expectations for their performance at the university. This should be a collaborative effort between the Enrollment Management Division, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs. In fact, the team strongly encourages the continued promotion and support of integrating Student Affairs with Academic Affairs to enhance the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

f) Expanding and promoting opportunities for an undergraduate research experience would contribute to improved student learning, utilize the special resources of a research-intensive campus, and be a useful tool in undergraduate recruiting.
10. Graduate Education

CU-Boulder meets the criteria for accreditation in the area of graduate education. The university has an active, high quality graduate education program, based on input from both the graduate students and the faculty/staff, as well as external views of their programs. The Graduate School appears to be well respected and viewed as working effectively with the different groups on campus.

One area for improvement is to centralize data collection on graduate programs (time to degree, financial support, enrollment, diversity, five-year outcomes, etc.) to facilitate decision making in the graduate school. Better data ranging all of the way from how graduate students select CU-Boulder for their graduate studies to how satisfied they are with their education after graduation could prove invaluable for future planning.

The United Government of Graduate Students, in conjunction with the graduate school, is improving the experience of graduate students at the university through their information and orientation activities. The team recommends that the university consider contributing on-going financial support to this student group.

The Task Force on Graduate Education identified a number of issues facing the university’s graduate programs in the areas of delivery, academic constituency and financial incentives which, if implemented, will strengthen the future of graduate education at CU-Boulder. Although decreasing graduate student enrollment is a national trend, the recommendations of the Task Force should help to mitigate the trend at CU-Boulder.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, a major concern is the low level of minority and international student enrollment. The Task Force addressed these concerns with plans to increase financial support, tuition reform and relief.

11. Assessment of Student Learning

Over the past 10 years, CU-Boulder has established a broad-based campus assessment program implemented by the Planning, Budgeting and Analysis office (PBA) to assist faculty members, administrators, and others evaluate the curriculum, plan improvements, and evaluate the effects of changes for improvements. Most of the emphasis is placed on individual program reviews at the undergraduate level supplemented by data collection and analysis of institutional
records with regard to the first-year experience. Program reviews and self-studies are performed every seven years, and student satisfaction surveys are regularly administered to graduating seniors and to alumni. Response rates have been about 50 percent, quite good for surveys of this type.

Although considerable program-level data about student and program performance is available, individual units vary widely in the degree to which they use this information to improve the quality of the educational experience. The campus should consider ways to encourage and hold respective units accountable for demonstrating how they are using assessment data for program improvement purposes. As previously noted, the most serious shortcoming in this regard is related to graduate student performance and research. Here, data collection efforts have been less frequent and the uses of the information have not been clearly articulated.

CU-Boulder typically relies on peer comparisons generated from such sources as U.S. News & World Report and others which focus primarily on inputs and a limited number of process indicators and few outcome measures such as persistence rates. More peer comparisons are needed to develop benchmarks against which the university's progress can be measured. CU-Boulder is participating in the spring 2000 administration of the National Survey of Student Engagement, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, which will provide some institutional-level data about student engagement beyond the first year, as both first-year and senior students are being surveyed. Perhaps a seminar for the Board of Regents could be offered that focuses on the importance of outcomes assessment and what has been learned to date about CU-Boulder and program improvement. Informed Regents can be very helpful in championing institutional improvement efforts and making such efforts an ongoing institutional priority.

Finally, there is not presently a coherent, widespread understanding of what types of information should constitute an effective outcomes assessment strategy. In part, this is because many people view program reviews, student and alumni surveys, and retention studies as independent rather than related activities that are needed to provide a comprehensive picture of the student experience and the quality of student learning at the university.

Suggestions for improvement include:
a) CU-Boulder should articulate and clarify a set of educational goals and desired outcomes for all undergraduates. These should be consistent with those described in the catalog for the respective academic units and with the new core curriculum adopted by the College of Arts and Sciences, and direct measures of student learning should be aligned with those goals and measurable objectives.

b) The student experience should be examined in a more comprehensive way including both experiences inside and outside the classroom with a particular emphasis on the character and influence of student groupings that form in off-campus residences after the first year of college. The concept of “academic neighborhoods” is conceptually consistent with the effort to keep students linked to the campus in intentional ways through the academic program or academic mission of the institution. But how this plan will be implemented is not clear. In order to realize the promise of the Total Learning Environment initiative, this information is essential.

c) A high profile campus-level assessment steering committee should be created to coordinate, prioritize, and hold various units and campus level agents accountable for collecting and using assessment data to improve student learning and for institutional improvement purposes. Such a group should be comprised of key faculty members, senior academic and student affairs administrators, students, and staff. Perhaps the committee could be a standing committee of the Boulder Faculty Assembly with strong endorsement and support from senior administration. The committee would not itself collect and manage assessment data, but rather would provide a vision and work with those personnel in institutional analysis and elsewhere on the campus who collect, analyze and interpret assessment data.

12. Outreach and Service

The university has an outstanding outreach and service unit, mostly coordinated by the Community Relations office in the office of Institutional Relations, but with some programs in the Division of Continuing Education. Examples include monthly lectures in Denver, on-site K-12 programs to support teachers throughout the state, and the CU-Boulder in Residence Program. This program is carried out in partnership with communities throughout the state. Up to year-long programs are designed to fit the needs of the community and the interests of the
university. These programs include such components as performing arts, exhibits, adult education, K-12 education, and business and technology themes.

The university also sponsors a Community Closet where materials and equipment in excess to the needs of the university are shared with schools and other not-for-profit organizations. They organize work days for Habitat for Humanity, have a community garden, conduct walkathons for various charities, and sponsor special drives for food, coats, and books. They have a Speakers Bureau to provide speakers in a variety of areas to interested outside groups. Many outside activities of individual departments and faculty members are not reported formally to the university.

Part of the outreach program of the university includes conducting off-campus classes for degree and certificate programs. Times and places of the classes are generally arranged to suit the needs of the local community, e.g., a course at a local company in a technical area. These can be arranged though Continuing Education or in some cases through the individual schools or colleges.

D. Criterion Four

_The institution can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness._

1. Total Learning Environment

As discussed earlier in this report, the university’s Total Learning Environment (TLE) initiative and implementation of the core curriculum in the College of Arts & Sciences are two programs which have impacted the undergraduate experience in very positive ways.

However, it was not clear how the Total Learning Environment (TLE) objectives are being used in the annual budgeting and planning cycles. Eventually, student outcomes data will be needed to estimate the impact of TLE on teaching and learning. This will be especially challenging with regard to developing and using indicators of the effectiveness of technology. In order to realize the goals of the Total Learning Environment, collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs must be promoted and supported at the highest levels of the institution for the campus to create a common language and vision drawn from the campus goals for undergraduate education.
2. Student Services Planning

Beginning in 1999, the Division of Student Affairs focused its planning within the framework of the Total Learning Environment. All functions are evaluated as to their impact on student learning, student development, and building a community of learners. The major outcome of this strategic planning has been “The Student Odyssey Project,” a multi-phase, six-year plan to redesign and improve services to students, involving all major units of the campus.

Under the sponsorship of the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, a full-time project manager directs the activities and coordinates campus involvement. The staff in the Division of Student Affairs are very energized by the Odyssey Project, and define themselves and their role on campus as “agents of change.” They are thinking of students not in terms of separate functions, but rather in longitudinal terms, from applicants for admission to alumni. As recommended earlier in this report, included in their endeavors are efforts to track the academic life of students during their sophomore to senior years, when typically most students move out of residence halls into the community of Boulder. They have established a neighborhood association in Boulder, and are training former RAP students (those who participated in residence hall academic programs) to participate as links between the university and the local community. They have even used the GIS resources to plot absentee landlord whereabouts and noise and crime complaints for neighborhood associations in Boulder as a way of establishing cooperative town-gown relationships. Included in the planning are much needed ways of assessing the effectiveness of the above efforts.

The one cautionary note among this otherwise energized and enthusiastic group of student affairs staff was their concern about the student development model, which drives all their efforts, being ghettoized in the Division of Student Affairs. For their processes and functions to contribute to the intellectual, moral, and ethical well-being of students, their efforts need to be formalized and integrated into the general understanding and culture of the campus. While excited about their plans and their achievements, the representatives of the different functions of student affairs expressed some concern that their efforts were not recognized or appreciated by faculty as part of the academic mission of the campus.
3. Capital Planning

The campus capital planning process is effective. It is initiated by units with appropriate administrative reviews, development of a programmatic plan, physical and cost planning. There are appropriate reviews by campus design groups, the community and the Chancellor before submittal to the Regents and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. This process provides for thorough review. The campus currently has a $100 million backlog awaiting CCHE and legislative approval. For a campus of this age, size, and mission this is typical of Research I public universities. The staff that oversees the capital planning process is knowledgeable and committed to supporting the various units on the campus. The university should be commended for the quality of its planning process and documents that have been prepared for immediate projects.

4. Information Technology Master Plan

Three years ago, the campus developed an Information Technology Strategic Plan, and significant progress has already been made on some plan objectives. In other areas, progress has been slower, but people seemed to have good reasons for the decisions and priorities that had been set (for example, the requirement for computer ownership, and the plan to install DMI on desktop systems). There were a few places where people seemed to have lost track of objectives and were not implementing them (some of the plans for the libraries, for example).

The team learned that there is a committee at work now on a new plan for educational technology, and this is seen in some sense as a successor to the IT Strategic Plan. It might be worthwhile to carry out a bit more “editing” and prioritizing on the next plan, and then do more public accountability, so everyone knows the status, and feels committed to the highest priority goals.

CU, like many major research universities, is in the throes of a PeopleSoft implementation. Opinion around campus was that the project hadn’t delivered expected benefits and was an expensive “problem.” Despite some reported dissatisfaction, the team commends the university for handling its implementations better than most similar institutions.
5. Budget Planning

The university has effective budget planning that reflects both internal and external circumstances. These plans are documented and regularly updated, and information is widely shared. The campus budget planning process has gone through significant changes in the past five years. In response to budgetary constraints, the campus has developed a multi-year budget planning process and is actively pursuing strategies to identify additional sources of revenue, create more enterprise activities, and continue to evaluate tuition, research indirect cost reimbursements, and private fundraising.

6. Diversity Planning

Of the 4000+ new students who matriculate annually, less than 2 percent are African Americans. The campus six-year graduation or continuation rate is the highest among all the four-year public institutions in the state, and the persistence rate from the first or second year is about even across ethnic groups, approximately 82 to 84 percent. However, about two-thirds of White students graduate within six years of their matriculation, compared with only about 45 percent of African American students and Hispanics.

The issue of minority student persistence is especially bedeviling, as no one seems to have a very good handle on how to solve the problem. The persistence puzzle is exacerbated by the fact that between 42-45 percent of students annually come from outside the state of Colorado. In some years the difference in graduation rates after six years between residents and non-resident was as much as 9 percentage points (for students entering in 1992). In other years (students entering in 1993) the difference was only 3 percentage points (62 percent compared with 65 percent residents). Non-resident students tend to be somewhat less well prepared than resident students in that while the former have higher SAT scores, their high school achievement levels as reflected by transcripts are lower.

The team notes that the level of internationalization among the Colorado student body lags significantly behind many peer institutions. Due to financial and numerical constraints imposed by the state, there is a double disincentive to internationalization of the student body (especially graduate students):
a) Because international students are unable to become residents and thus pay out-of-state tuition throughout their tenure at the university, and because international non-residents cannot be put on federal training grants, there is a disincentive to recruit international students.

b) Because the way to by-pass the tuition problem is to hire a student as a teaching assistant, there is a growing tendency to place first-year international students in TAships. The university is therefore vulnerable to having language problems of international students compromise the quality of undergraduate education.

E. Criterion Five

*The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.*

1. University Publications

The university produces a large number of publications both for internal and external audiences – most produced by the Publications and Marketing section of Institutional Relations. With photography, design and layout, and writing services available, most university departments find it easy to go through this office. Thus, a uniform standard of quality, theme, and credibility can be maintained.

2. Policies and Procedures

There is a systemwide statement of policies and procedures to which individual campuses must adhere in developing their own policies and procedures. The Boulder campus has its own set of documents that are quite explicit about policies and procedures on campus and they are readily available on-line and in hard copy.

The University of Colorado Board of Regents publishes the *Laws of the Regents*, the latest version of which is current through September 1999. *The University of Colorado Faculty Handbook*, which is currently being revised but is available in electronic form, provides a well-organized and comprehensive statement of the policies and procedures covering all aspects of faculty roles and responsibilities.

The university provides a number of other documents on policies and procedures too. The College of Arts and Sciences provides a *Desk Reference for Chairs and Directors*, dated fall, 1997. In addition, the Office of Faculty Affairs of the College of Arts and Sciences publishes a *Reference Guide for New Faculty at Colorado University at Boulder*, fall 1997, which provides a
comprehensive statement of college policies and procedures as well as a good deal of information on university policies, procedures, and guidelines.

Staff policy and procedures are elaborated in the State of Colorado Employee Handbook. The University of Colorado Student Union publishes a set of documents, last dated 1999, which details by-laws. The United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) publishes its constitution and minutes of the UGGS Assembly meetings.

Finally, the Boulder campus maintains a two volume CU-Boulder Campus Policy and Procedures Manual, which incorporates numerous documents on policies and procedures.

3. Integrity in Research

CU-Boulder has appropriate forms, process and procedures to ensure integrity in research. One suggestion would be to include such information on research in the New Faculty Orientation handbook.

4. Athletics

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics underwent an National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) accreditation review in September of 1998. The final report of the review team was shared with the NCA site visit team, and all recommendations of the NCAA team were reviewed with the Associate Director of Athletics. One of the major recommendations of the NCAA team was to transfer control of intercollegiate athletics from the President of the university system to the Chancellor of the CU-Boulder campus. This has now been completed, and considerable progress has been made on the NCAA team’s recommendations pertaining to rules compliance, academic integrity, fiscal integrity, and the institution’s commitment to equity.

Overall, it appears that the Department of Athletics is being responsibly managed in an effort to meet all NCAA standards and university expectations. Among the challenges that still require considerable effort are the following: a) strengthen relations with the Boulder Faculty Assembly’s Intercollegiate Athletics Committee and the faculty in general, b) improve graduation rates for football and men’s basketball, and c) develop a computer-based course audit program that works directly off of the student information system (needed to assure compliance with all NCAA academic progress requirements).
The team finds that the University of Colorado at Boulder meets the five Criteria for Accreditation of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

V. Federal Compliance and Third Party Comment

The team examined the university’s financial aid policies, processes, Title IV records, repayment rates, and audit reports. It also reviewed advertising and recruitment materials, and compared the credits awarded and length of the university’s educational programs with those of similar institutions. Based on its review of these documents, the team concludes the university is in compliance with the Higher Education Reauthorization Act.

The team reviewed the actions taken by the university to inform the public of its impending accreditation review and to invite public comment regarding the quality of its services. Third party comment documents were made available to the team during the accreditation visit. The team concluded that the information gathered through the Self-Study process and through the campus visit adequately addressed issues of federal compliance and third party comment.
VI. Institutional Strengths, Suggestions, and Concerns

A. Strengths

The University of Colorado at Boulder is an outstanding research university. It should be a continuing source of pride to the citizens of Colorado. It is truly a state and national resource as a “Community of Learners,” as the Self-Study was entitled, engaged in learning, research, teaching and service, and as an important educator of leaders in the private and public sectors in the state of Colorado. As such, it is a strong engine of economic development for the state.

The team especially commends the university and its leadership for its development and maintenance of excellence in a state where the political climate, state regulatory bureaucracy, and general level of support for higher education make it particularly challenging to provide access to excellence at the post-secondary level. We also commend the campus for its several efforts in assuring a safe environment for the learning community.

B. Suggestions

• Reorganize administration

  The team suggests realignment of senior level administrative duties and responsibilities and consideration of the addition of two positions.

  1. Chancellor. The Chancellor could best manage tasks such as aggressively pursuing externally funded research, developing fundraising activities such as the capital campaign, university-industry partnerships, technology transfer, licensing and patenting, and public advocacy on behalf of the university. Other tasks falling under the Chancellor’s position would include establishing a more collaborative relationship between the Boulder campus and the city regarding safety, creating a climate supportive of diversity, and addressing land use issues. The team suggests that Boulder administrators represent the university in the AAU and other groups.

  2. Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Another possibility would be to identify the chief academic officer as the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Tenure decisions should be delegated to the campus under this office. This position would assume more day-to-day administrative responsibility for the Boulder campus to ensure that academic priorities drive the agenda of the university. It is essential, of course, that the
Executive Vice Chancellor be given renewable discretionary resources commensurate with the responsibilities delegated to this office.

In this reorganization scenario, the remaining three Vice Chancellors would report to the Executive Vice Chancellor and have a dotted reporting line to the Chancellor. Within that framework, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School might be designated the Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School. Such a change would improve direct collaboration between the chief research officer for the university and the other Vice Chancellors. And, the importance of the research enterprise would be more readily recognized by internal and external communities with whom the chief research officer must work.

3. Additional senior level positions for IT and Diversity. The team recommends establishing two additional positions, one with overall responsibility for information technology and one with primary responsibility for diversity. With a chief officer for IT, the university could do a better job of informing stakeholders of benefits information technology provides to the research, teaching, and service missions of the university. Also, the IT area would benefit from an aggressive and creative focus on services and support, in parallel with technology infrastructure, as well as a governance arrangement that would draw more academic citizens into the decision-making process.

And, of course, the diversity person could lead the enhancement of diversity programs discussed below. The team recommends that the Associate Vice Chancellor for Equity and Diversity be made an integral player in the senior-level administration of the university.

4. Miscellaneous. The university administration may wish to consider an alternative administrative arrangement for the management of the library. Currently, the system is headed by a dean whose “collegial” interactions with peer deans seems to mitigate effectiveness in advocacy for the “common good” needs which a library requires within a university structure. Since this “common good” policy is embraced by the vast majority of Research I Universities, the leadership of the University of Colorado is encouraged to consider addressing this matter.
• **Improve student advising and auditing system**

The NCA review team strongly urges the university to develop a plan and provide the resources required to re-establish accurate and reliable degree audit programs for most degree programs and majors. Additionally, it is recommended that enhancements of the student information system be pursued to relieve professional advisers of tasks that do not use their time wisely. For example, computer support for the identification and notification of students placed on probation or dismissed from the university would save professional advisers a significant amount of time during a period when there is considerable demand for one-on-one advising, and would assure accuracy and uniformity in applying academic standards.

• **De-couple capital campaign for Boulder campus from systemwide campaign.**

The team strongly recommends that the capital campaign for the Boulder campus be decoupled from the systemwide capital campaign. This would allow the CU-Boulder campus to focus on those areas especially important for a research-intensive campus, and would allow the campus to create its own schedule of events without distractions of timing that are convenient for the other campuses.

C. **Concerns**

• **Enhance Diversity Planning**

CU-Boulder clearly needs to increase the percentage of underrepresented groups within the student body and to improve the climate for diverse groups. Progress in increasing the overall diversity of the university will require cooperation between the city of Boulder and the campus to address “poor environment” issues.

Campus issues contributing to the problem include:

1. **Responsibility.** Although the administration is quite committed to diversity, there appears to be a disconnect with some campus groups in that they don’t truly view diversity as part of their responsibility—an attitude which really hinders progress. In contrast, some programs are making great progress based on data and the views of faculty, staff, and students. Recognizing and rewarding such successful programs could help alter the view of those who don’t accept diversity as their responsibility.
2. Diversity in leadership positions. The diversity in leadership positions at CU-Boulder, including central administration, is limited with regard to women and racial minorities. Efforts to increase representation in leadership positions would reinforce diversity as a campus responsibility. Also, there is an apparent need for improvement in the climate for women and racial minorities in leadership positions at the university; this will need to be a priority for effective change to occur.

3. Equity and diversity office. The prolonged interim status of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Equity and Diversity seems to be causing uncertainty about the future of diversity efforts. Appointing a person to that position with strong backing from central administration would go a long way toward providing the necessary leadership to guide the university in enhancing diversity programs and initiatives throughout the entire university.

4. Mentoring. CU-Boulder is recruiting an impressive number of assistant professors who are women and racial minorities; however, efforts to ensure their success and retention need to be strengthened. Although the orientation program for new faculty is helpful, a more formal mentoring program for underrepresented groups would strengthen CU-Boulder’s likelihood of successfully realizing its investment in these junior faculty members.

5. Retention of minority undergraduates. Part of the problem of retention of minority undergraduates may stem from the fact that most students reside off campus after the freshman year. The MASP program in the College of Arts and Sciences is one successful model that should be encouraged throughout the campus. MASP provides a summer bridge program for incoming freshmen, then provides a structured, on campus intellectual home for the students throughout their time at the university. The retention and graduation rates of the MASP students are good evidence for the success of this strategy.

6. Community climate. The university and the Boulder community in particular are not perceived as being particularly welcoming places to students of color. As a result, increasing the minority student persistence rate cannot be solved by the campus alone but will require an enormous amount of cooperation, goodwill, and commitment on the part of both university members and residents of the larger community of Boulder.
• Mitigate the effects of restrictions on state funding in order to provide resources to retain and energize top faculty

The campus is aware of the state and local financial constraints, and the administration is developing strategies to improve and diversify funding sources. The campus will continue to be challenged to maintain its competitiveness with other major research universities because of state financial constraints. Resources are being wisely managed and the campus is doing a good job of internal communication.

It will require continued vigilance and skillful management to maintain an adequate financial base for the future. The university needs to do a better job of informing the people of Colorado about the impact the university has on their future and the importance of maintaining a reasonable level of state support – the current level of state support is low relative to comparable public universities. As noted earlier in this report, the unintended consequence of the 1992 Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR) has further put the University of Colorado Boulder at risk. Increased private fundraising will be important but cannot replace core state support for a public university.

The campus is aware of the need to improve competitive salaries, provide funds for start-up and new initiatives. The use of an “all-funds” strategy is an effective approach.

• Expand physical plant; improve city/university relations

The campus has a number of physical growth and development issues with the local Boulder community which require continual attention. Growth immediately adjacent to the campus and the development of a south campus create community concerns such as historical preservation and maintenance of open space. Although the campus has developed effective internal plans, they have not gotten them accepted by the community at large. There also needs to be clarification regarding the role of the system office and the campus. The university is aware of these issues and appears to be addressing them. This is critical if the campus is going to continue to have the physical facilities it needs to implement its strategic plans.

Both the campus administration and community leaders indicated that they believe these concerns will get resolved. Because of the presence of the System Administration and local Regents, the campus needs to clarify who speaks for the university with the local community.
The university and Regents need to continue to work with the CCHE to maintain their institutional priorities. There have been cases where outside groups have influenced the appropriation process modifying the institutional priorities. If this occurs frequently, the logical development and growth of the campus will be impeded.

There continue to be challenges for the university. There is a very large amount of deferred maintenance on the physical plant, now estimated to be over $100M. Because many of the buildings came “on-line” together, it is estimated that the university will need to deal with as much as 60 percent of the maintenance costs at one time.

A second challenge arises from the lengthy process required to implement capital improvements. At present, any project costing more than $0.5M requires 5-8 years to go from a good idea to reality. Each project requires multiple levels of scrutiny and approval – at the levels of the campus, the university, the Regents, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, and the legislature – and priorities can be altered at any step along the way. This time frame is required for all capital projects, whether they be for renovations or for a new building, regardless of the source of the funding, and regardless of the purpose of the building. This tortuous path is counterproductive in at least two ways. One, the long time it takes may disconnect an idea from reality; such a disconnect, in turn, is counter-productive in terms of faculty ownership and initiative. Two, because priorities can be altered at any level in the process, there is a disconnect between campus planning/prioritization and what actually occurs. This can negatively impact fundraising efforts and, again, is counter to the goal of faculty and community involvement.

• **Assessment**

As indicated in the site visit report, there are a variety of opportunities for the institution to collect more information that can be utilized for assessment purposes. This is particularly true for, but not limited to, the graduate/research area. Of course, appropriate information utilized in an assessment instrument is only the first part of a healthy pervasive assessment culture in a university. The second part as indicated above is the use of assessment results to change and improve the various areas of the university. In order to focus internal thinking in this area and to provide a benchmark for the university, we make the following recommendation:
The University of Colorado at Boulder should prepare a three-year progress report on the use of assessment as a tool to improve undergraduate and graduate student learning and for institutional improvement in the fall of 2003, with a copy to NCA. This report should focus on undergraduate and graduate education on the CU-Boulder campus. We believe that the steps CU-Boulder takes in the next three years to institutionalize assessment will benefit the university, and the progress report will serve as a stimulant and summary for this initiative.
VII. Team’s Recommendation and Rationale

The team recommends that accreditation for the University of Colorado at Boulder be continued by the North Central Association with a comprehensive institutional visit in 10 years.

This recommendation is based on several factors:

a) The university has satisfactorily responded to previously identified concerns/challenges as outlined in Section II.

b) The university has fully met all the General Institutional Requirements for accreditation as outlined in Section III.

c) The university has a superior record of meeting the Criteria for Accreditation as outlined in Section IV. The university has an outstanding faculty, staff and administration. They have a clearly defined academic mission and the resources, organization, and facilities to provide an exceptional learning environment to undergraduate and graduate students in the degree programs offered.

The visiting team has made several suggestions for institutional improvement associated with administrative organization, student advising, and the capital campaign for the Boulder campus. The team has also listed concerns with regard to: a) overall diversity of the university, b) resources to retain and energize top faculty, c) physical plant (and relatedly city/university relations), and d) assessment.

The suggestions noted above in Section VI-B are meant to be helpful guides, and the university should carefully consider whether or not these are useful given the local culture and resources.

A plan of response to the concerns expressed in Section VI-C is required for the University to maintain and build on the high level of excellence it now enjoys. These concerns are of a chronic nature and are not life-threatening in the short term to the academic excellence of the University. However, if not addressed over the next decade, they could lead to more serious institutional problems.

The assessment area in Section VI-C has been set aside for special focus. We believe it is to the university’s great advantage if assessment of student learning and the use of this information along with program review is coupled directly to curriculum reform and program
improvement. While impressive progress has been demonstrated at the undergraduate level in assessment, we did not see compelling evidence of the coupling envisaged above at the institutional level.

Therefore, the team recommends that the University of Colorado at Boulder prepare a three-year progress report on the use of assessment as a tool for institutional improvement in the fall of 2003, with a copy to NCA. Suggested content of this report is detailed in the Assessment section above.
### WORKSHEET FOR STATEMENT OF AFFILIATION STATUS

**INSTITUTION:** UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER  
Campus Box 17  
Boulder, CO 80309

**TYPE OF REVIEW:** Continued Accreditation

**DATE OF THIS REVIEW:** April 17, 2000 — April 19, 2000

**COMMISSION ACTION:**

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**HIGHEST DEGREE AWARDED:** Doctor's.

| Institution | Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING |
| Team | Recommended Wording: RETAIN ORIGINAL WORDING |

**MOST RECENT ACTION:** March 19, 1990.

**TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE**

| STIPULATIONS ON AFFILIATION STATUS | None. |
| Institution | Recommended Wording: NONE. |
| Team | Recommended Wording: NONE. |
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

NEW DEGREE SITES:

Prior Commission approval required.

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PROGRESS REPORTS REQUIRED:

None.

Team Recommended Wording: 4/1/03; A report on the use of assessment as a tool to improve undergraduate and graduate student learning and for institutional improvement.

MONITORING REPORTS REQUIRED:

None.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

CONTINGENCY REPORTS REQUIRED:

None.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

OTHER VISITS REQUIRED:

None.

Team Recommended Wording: NONE.

LAST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 1989-90.

TO BE CHANGED BY THE COMMISSION OFFICE

NEXT COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: 2009-10.