May 29, 2003

Dr. Richard L. Byyny
Chancellor
University of Colorado at Boulder
17 UCB
Boulder, CO 80309-0017

Dear Chancellor Byyny:

The progress report you submitted to our office has now been reviewed. A staff analysis of the report is enclosed.

On behalf of the Commission, I accept the report on the use of assessment as a tool to improve undergraduate and graduate student learning and for institutional improvement. No further reports are required. The institution’s next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2009-10.

I am also enclosing a copy of the institution’s Statement of Affiliation Status, which reflects the actions I have taken on behalf of the Commission. If you have any questions about this analysis or any other evaluation matters, please let me know. I can be reached via email at btaylor@hlcommission.org or by voice at (800) 621-7440 x 139.

Sincerely,

Barbara Pollard Taylor, Mus.Ed.D.
Assistant Director for Process Integrity

Enclosures
STAFF ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL REPORT

DATE: May 29, 2003
STAFF: Barbara Pollard Taylor, Assistant Director

INSTITUTION: University of Colorado at Boulder, Boulder, CO

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Richard L. Byyny, Chancellor

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION RE: REPORT: A progress report due on 4/1/03 focused on the use of assessment as a tool to improve undergraduate and graduate student learning and for institutional improvement.

ITEMS ADDRESSED IN REPORT: The University of Colorado at Boulder report on the above topics was received at The Higher Learning Commission office on 3/31/03.

STAFF ANALYSIS: The report of the April 2000 evaluation visit to the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU-Boulder) recommended that the progress report focus on steps the University has taken to institutionalize assessment in undergraduate and graduate education. The University’s response was a 22-page report on the three-years of its efforts to strengthen its academic assessment processes and commitment. It described the procedural changes that support faculty assessment efforts and the results to date, and noted that supporting materials and reports could be viewed on the campus assessment website at www.Colorado.edu/pba/outcomes.

The Assessment Oversight Committee (AOC) was charged to re-examine existing practices, recommend strategies where change is warranted, and improve effectiveness of assessment practices. The AOC provides leadership for assessment on the campus and gives guidance, assistance, encouragement, and budgetary support for assessment practices. Its activities, goals, and success have included:

- Maintain each program area’s focus on student learning outcomes
- Integrate the assessment of student learning outcomes with the institution’s program review process with regular reports on assessment activities and results
- Develop an expertise on national patterns and best practices in assessment
- Manage a budget ($50,000)
- Post to website, the assessment reports of individual units.
To focus attention on assessment of student learning in graduate programs, the AOC has:

- Added two members of the Graduate School staff to the AOC Committee
- Conducted fact-finding meetings with each department to request learning outcomes assessment information and to notify the areas that these would be collected annually
- Provided a voice supporting the importance of assessment with its focus on department objectives and assessment methodology.

The UC-Boulder assessment report is a concise, yet complete report of the institution's movement toward having a culture of assessment in both graduate and undergraduate programs. The AOC has made assessment an open process through its use of the website. Its statements of priorities for the next year reflect an understanding of the factors needed to make the assessment of student learning outcomes a vital part of each programs objectives. Collaboratively, it is "building bridges" among departments as a culture of assessment is taking hold on the campus.

**STAFF ACTION:** Accept the report focused on the use of assessment as a tool to improve undergraduate and graduate student learning and for institutional improvement. No further reports are due. The institution's next comprehensive evaluation is scheduled for 2009-10.