<u>**University of Colorado Boulder**</u>

<u>**Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Year 4 Assurance Argument Filing**</u>

<u>**Submitted to HLC June 1, 2024**</u>

NOTE: Embedded links current as of the HLC submission date above.

Criterion 1. Mission
The institution's mission is clear and articulated publicly; it guides the institution's operations.

1.A. The institution's mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.

1.A.1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.

1.A.1. The mission of the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) as the flagship state university is established in the state constitution and in law. Article VIII, Section 5 of the Constitution of the State of Colorado establishes "the university at Boulder, Colorado Springs, and Denver" as a state institution of higher education. CU Boulder's distinct statutory role and mission are to offer graduate as well as undergraduate programs and to focus on research excellence. Colorado law defines CU Boulder as "a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards," requires CU Boulder to "offer a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degree programs," and gives CU Boulder "exclusive authority to offer graduate programs in law" (C.R.S. 23-20-101).

Article VIII, Section 5 of the Colorado constitution further provides that "the governing boards of the state institutions of higher education . . . shall have the general supervision of their respective institutions and the exclusive control and direction of all funds of and appropriations to their respective institutions, unless otherwise provided by law." Accordingly, the University of Colorado Board of Regents further defines the mission of the University of Colorado system and of each of its campuses. Article 1 of the Laws of the University of Colorado Board of Regents (see 2.C.) states, "The University of Colorado is a public research university with multiple campuses serving Colorado, the nation, and the world through leadership in high-quality education and professional training, public service, advancing research and knowledge, and state-of-the-art health care. Each campus has a distinct role and mission as provided by Colorado law." The Board of Regents Strategic Plan recognizes those distinct campus roles and missions and sets out how measurements, assessments and goals set for the University of Colorado as a whole apply differently to the four campuses.

Board of Regents Policy 1.B. further defines the mission of the University of Colorado as a whole: to provide an excellent education for all qualified students; uphold ethical standards and steward the university's resources responsibly; build an educational community in which diversity is a fundamental

value; support innovation and entrepreneurship; and strive to meet the educational and workforce needs of Colorado and its residents. The specific mission of CU Boulder, then, is to bring these actions into practice through education and through engagement in scholarship, creative work, research and discovery. CU Boulder's status as one of 38 public universities among the 69 U.S. members of the Association of American Universities (AAU) demonstrates its commitment to its mission of excellence in research and creative work, as well as its commitment to both graduate and undergraduate education.

Bringing CU Boulder's mission into practice requires guiding principles. To that end, in 2016 the chancellor established the CU Boulder strategic imperatives:

Strategic Imperative 1: Shape Tomorrow's Leaders. Recruit, retain and graduate students committed to demonstrating honor, integrity, accountability, respect and contributions to the common good; understanding, sharing and engaging diverse perspectives; and developing critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills by fully participating in CU Boulder's academically rigorous programs and community. Recognize and engage graduates who consistently demonstrate CU Boulder values and apply intellectual curiosity, rigor and collaboration to creatively address complex issues and opportunities.

Strategic Imperative 2: Be the Top University for Innovation. Serve as the nexus for innovation by facilitating collaboration among universities, industry, laboratories and communities to elucidate and address complex issues and opportunities.

Strategic Imperative 3: Positively Impact Humanity. Broaden and expand research, scholarship and creative work, and articulate the positive societal outcomes they advance. Collaborate to produce graduates who apply their CU experience to make meaningful contributions to society.

The strategic imperatives complement the Colorado Creed, the university's code of ethics and conduct developed in 2004 by CU Boulder students and publicized through ongoing student organizations and affiliated student groups.

Together, CU Boulder's statutory mission, strategic imperatives and Colorado Creed explicitly underlie CU Boulder's daily operations and its planning for the future.

1.A.2. The mission and related statements are current and reference the institution's emphasis on the various aspects of its mission, such as instruction, scholarship, research, application of research, creative works, clinical service, public service, economic development and religious or cultural purpose.

1.A.3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.

1.A.2. and 1.A.3. The Board of Regents last reviewed and revised Article 1 of the Laws of the Regents, which defines the University of Colorado's mission as a whole, in 2018. The Colorado legislature last amended the statute defining the specific mission of CU Boulder in 2022 (C.R.S. 23-20-101). CU Boulder updated its vision for achieving its mission in 2016 with the chancellor's establishment of the CU Boulder strategic imperatives (see 1.A.1.). The relationship among the university's mission, values, strategic imperatives, planning and strategic initiatives is laid out on the university's "About" web page.

By means of ongoing planning and implementation, CU Boulder is bringing those strategic imperatives into the current moment, taking into account the most recent developments and changes in needs and opportunities for the university, planning for the needs and opportunities of the future, and identifying the current and future constituents of the university's activities. At the time of submitting its last Assurance Argument in 2019, CU Boulder reported on a number of strategic planning initiatives in progress, including initiatives having to do with budget, campus infrastructure, the first-year experience, and inclusive and equitable principles and practices. Since that time, the university has furthered its implementation of these initiatives in ways that will be referenced throughout the current Assurance Argument. The strategic planning initiative that we wish to draw attention to here is the one that most explicitly addresses, and maps out implementation plans for, the university's mission as a flagship public university dedicated to comprehensive teaching and research: *Academic Futures.*

To further its mission, including its identity as established in the Colorado constitution and law, the Chancellor's Strategic Imperatives, and the Colorado Creed (se 1.A.1.), CU Boulder engaged in the Academic Futures strategic initiative, which identified mission-critical principles as well as key academic goals for the university. Importantly, Academic Futures expressed how the members of the university—faculty, staff, and students—saw our mission and the best ways to carry it into the future. The process that led to the Academic Futures report was truly a grassroots, pan-community effort, more like a small-town urban planning process than a typical academic task force. The process offered department and unit-level discussions; ran facilitated and thematic conversations; welcomed white papers (more than 150 were submitted) and online comments; and featured town halls.

Published in 2018, the Academic Futures report summarizes CU Boulder's overarching goal as "Embracing the Core Mission of Furthering the Public Good" and explicitly ties this goal to the university's mission and strategic imperatives. In addition, the report's recommendations stem from two foundational values: practicing equity and inclusive excellence; and sustaining, supporting and inspiring our community. Further, the Academic Futures report addresses specific actions CU Boulder should consider as it pursues its strategic imperatives of shaping tomorrow's leaders, being a top university for innovation and positively impacting humanity:

1. A Common Student-Centered Approach to Learning
2. Interdisciplinary Teaching, Research and Creative Works
3. Internationalizing Our Campus
4. Teaching and Technology, Online and Distance Education

Academic Futures is a touchstone throughout this Assurance Argument; it remains the template for the university and is guiding how CU Boulder will achieve its goals. (Indeed, the recent faculty-led program review of the Division of Academic Affairs focused on progress on the Academic Futures goals.) While several of the Academic Futures projects have been slowed by the pandemic and/or have been sequenced for concerted action later in the queue, considerable progress has been made on Projects 1 and 4, "A Common Student-Centered Approach to Learning" and "Teaching and Technology, Online and Distance Education," as well as on the fundamental principles of supporting, sustaining and inspiring our community and engaging in inclusive and equitable practices.

For some of the Academic Futures goals, progress has actually been hastened by the university's imperative in 2020 and 2021 to maintain its mission under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The university's data-informed, swiftly pivoting decisions and actions during the pandemic, marked by teamwork among faculty, staff and administration and by the breaking down of traditional siloes of

responsibility, became the framework for two major initiatives designed to implement Academic Futures goals: the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) effort beginning in fall 2021, and the Transformation and Resiliency effort beginning in spring 2024. These efforts will be discussed throughout this Assurance Argument because they demonstrate CU Boulder's commitment to transforming planning into action in service of our mission.

1.A.4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.

1.A.4. CU Boulder fulfills its mission as a comprehensive research university by offering 81 degrees at the bachelor's level and 155 master's, doctoral and professional degree programs in a full range of liberal arts and professional disciplines—arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and mathematics, engineering and applied science, music, business, education, environmental design, law, and communication, media and information—along with 97 undergraduate minors and 56 undergraduate and 112 graduate and professional certificates. New degree programs, minors and certificates are added, and existing ones revised to reflect new developments and directions in education and research/creative work. Several recent new degree programs are interdisciplinary. For example, new degrees (BS, MS and PhD) in biomedical engineering began in fall 2020, and a new bachelor's degree in public health has been approved by the Board of Regents to begin in fall 2025. Some new professional master's programs are composed of stackable certificates, such as the professional master's degree in outdoor recreation economy.

In accordance with its mission as a public university serving the state and by Colorado statute, the University of Colorado must enroll at least 55% Colorado residents in its first-year cohort, based on a three-year rolling average (C.R.S. 23-1-113.5). International students and students enrolled solely in online courses do not count toward this total, and resident students whose academic merit earns them the designation of Colorado Scholars are double counted for the purposes of this calculation. As of fall 2023, 57% of CU Boulder students were Colorado residents and 43% nonresidents. International students made up 7% of the student body in fall 2023.

Through their academic programs, both undergraduate and graduate students are involved in research and creative work that supports the mission of CU Boulder as a public research university (see 3.B.4.). National and international rankings such as the Academic Ranking of World Universities (the Shanghai Ranking) and the *U.S. News and World Report* graduate programs ranking place the university, as well as programs across the colleges and schools and in every disciplinary area, in the top tier. In FY 2022-23, the University of Colorado Boulder received a record $684.2 million in sponsored project award funding, with 4,975 awards and gifts. Research and development expenditures in FY 2021–22 ranked CU Boulder No. 50 in the nation, one of only seven universities in the top 50 that do not include a medical school. Areas of particular strength in terms of sponsored funding include aerospace, biosciences, earth and environmental sciences, energy, and fundamental sciences. The Research and Innovative Office (RIO) assists CU Boulder faculty, staff and students in continuing the university's upward trajectory in research, scholarship and creative work.

Support services appropriate to the University of Colorado's mission to serve a diverse student population come in many forms and from many units at CU Boulder. The Division of Student Affairs provides a wide array of services to support the education, well-being and career preparation of both undergraduate and graduate students, including diverse communities (see 3.C. for more detail). Housing and Dining Services provides many options for dining on campus, housing mainly for first- and second-

year students and graduate students, and assistance to students in locating off-campus housing. In line with the 2021 Campus Master Plan, approved by the Board of Regents in 2022, new housing has recently been approved to meet student demand, and the recent annexation by the city of Boulder of the CU Boulder South property paves the way for additional student housing. Other support services for specific student populations as well as the student body as a whole are provided by the Office of Financial Aid and the Scholarships, Registrar's and Bursar's offices.

Undergraduate admission is selective. Undergraduate enrollment in fall 2023 was 30,707 students (a 24% increase from 2014). Of undergraduates enrolled in fall 2023, 57% were Colorado residents and 43% nonresidents. International students made up 3% of the undergraduate student body in fall 2023, a significant decline from peak undergraduate international enrollment in 2017.

In accordance with CU Boulder's mission of graduate education, graduate enrollment also increased during the current decade, reaching 6,406 in fall 2023 (a 29% increase from 2014). CU Boulder is the primary contributor to the University of Colorado's ranking tenth among U.S. universities in numbers of graduate students in science, engineering and health. The elasticity of enrollment in doctoral programs and funded master's programs is, of course, limited by funding, as well as by the availability of other necessary resources for graduate student research and creative work (see 5.B.). Of the graduate students enrolled in fall 2023, 56% were Colorado residents and 44% nonresidents, demonstrating CU Boulder's commitment to serving the needs of Colorado residents for graduate education. International students were at an all-time high in fall 2023 and made up 26% of the graduate student body.

In 2023, CU Boulder began developing a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan to guide and coordinate its undergraduate enrollment marketing, recruitment, and retention activities for the next five years. The initiative was led by Enrollment Management and supported through interviews with academic, administrative and student leaders, market and competitor research, and an empirical analysis of incoming admissions cohorts and their subsequent retention factors. The SEM Planning process identified targeted strategies in four main thematic areas: (1) Administrative Efficiency; (2) Modernization of Enrollment Practices; (3) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and (4) Retention Optimization. The tenets of the SEM Plan will empower CU Boulder to fulfill its educational mission by expediting admissions and scholarship decision release timelines, more effectively using and sharing data, developing in-demand academic offerings, enhancing student services, and diversifying incoming classes through new recruitment channels (in addition to other strategies). The SEM Plan is expected to be finalized in summer 2024 to guide operational and strategic decisions for the five-year period from 2024 to 2028.

Even before the SEM Plan has been fully launched, the university is pursuing enrollment and financial aid reforms that will further CU Boulder's mission of serving the citizens of Colorado (see also 1.B.1.). In fall 2023, after the passage of enabling state legislation, the university increased its funding for the Esteemed Scholars program, offered to a select group of new Colorado resident first-year students based on the strength of their admissions applications. The yield rates for these admitted students have increased significantly. In 2023, the university announced a major expansion of its CU Promise program, doubling the number of Colorado resident students with significant financial need who are eligible for free tuition and fees.

1.A.5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans and institutional priorities

CU Boulder articulates its mission, vision, values and goals on its "About" web page. Both here and in other statements of institutional priorities, the university's practice and plans are explicitly rooted in the mission, as the state's flagship research university, to serve our students and the people of Colorado.

As described in 1.A.2. and 1.A.3., the university's Academic Futures report, as a statement of purpose and guiding template for current and future academic initiatives, is founded in the mission and strategic imperatives of CU Boulder. Other examples of statements of institutional priorities and their express engagement with the university's mission include the following:

1. In fall 2021, the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative was launched to build upon practices developed during the pandemic crisis to propose and quickly implement solutions to barriers to student success at the institutional level that span the student journey, including the students' academic and out-of-classroom experiences. BUS is explicitly connected to two Academic Futures goals related to undergraduate students, "supporting, sustaining and inspiring our community" and "a student-centered approach to learning," and its efforts are founded on a working definition of student success developed by university leadership: "Successful CU Boulder students complete their degree programs with a high-quality, meaningful, and accessible education in a reasonable amount of time, feeling like they belong to vibrant, diverse, and inclusive social and academic communities."

2. In 2022, CU Boulder implemented a new incentive-based budget model to align with key guiding principles of the university (see 5.B.1.). In our previous model, funding allocations were made each year based on legacy decisions made long ago, and at various times. Only a very small percentage of revenues might be available in a typical year for investment in mission-aligned projects or activities. Throughout the new model design process, the university's mission and priorities influenced design components and allocation methodology. For example, as CU Boulder works toward improved outcomes from our student population, the model is designed to provide budget allocations in support of undergraduate student retention and graduation.

3. In March 2024, the provost and chief operating officer announced the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative (see 5.B.2.), designed to accelerate changes to how CU Boulder operates as we begin to see a growing number of peer institutions facing structural deficits in their financial models that are causing deep operational cuts. The initiative will focus on four priority projects that carry out and create resources for goals described in or related to Academic Futures:

    -   Examining how first-year students are enrolled at the university
    -   Improving wraparound support for all students (such as advising, tutoring, and all elements of student life), and improving the first-year experience for our newest students
    -   Fostering greater employee engagement and well-being
    -   Enhancing operational excellence through improving technology, automation, work processes and policies

Public and campuswide information

See 1.A.1. for websites that publish CU Boulder's state-mandated missions and CU Boulder's statements of its vision, values and strategic imperatives. The chancellor communicates CU Boulder's goals and their alignment with the strategic imperatives in the annual State of the Campus address as well as in other speeches, columns and e-communications. For the last three years, the chancellor's State of the Campus address has focused on two issues critical to the mission of the university: student success; and preparing students to engage in a diverse democracy. Letters from the chancellor to the university community have stressed staying true to that mission in times of national debate. Recent examples include a 2021 message about the January 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol, "Upholding Our Values and Democracy," and a 2023 message about anticipated U.S. Supreme Court decisions, "CU Boulder's Role in Times of Turmoil."

CU Boulder leadership and communicators articulate to the university how the university's aims dovetail with each other and are leading to decision-making and results. "Leadership Corner" columns and videos from university leadership and "The Provost's Post" communicate CU Boulder plans and priorities to faculty, staff, students and the public, as do emailed, web-based and social media updates from CU Boulder Today. The Office of Strategic Relations and Communications and the universitywide Senior Communicators Working Group ensure that university communication reaches the audiences that it should.

Specific audiences

Along with communications directed to the entire university community and/or to the public, the university expresses its mission through engagements with specific university audiences. New employees, both faculty and staff, learn about the CU Boulder mission and priorities at the time of onboarding, either at the new faculty orientation or through the new employee welcome experience (offered in person and online). The Employee Passport, launched in 2022, reinforces the campus mission, vision and strategic imperatives by encouraging employee engagement in campus programming aligned with each imperative. Finally, several prestigious awards celebrate university community members who demonstrate excellence in support of the university mission. For example, the Hazel Barnes Prize, the largest and most prestigious single faculty award funded by CU Boulder recognizes "the enriching interrelationship between teaching and research"; the Boulder Faculty Assembly Excellence Awards recognize faculty for Excellence in Leadership and Service, Excellence in Research, Scholarly and Creative Work, and Excellence in Teaching; and the Chancellor Employee of the Year Award recognizes employees who are valuable contributors to CU Boulder's mission, vision and strategic imperatives.

For students, the university's mission is articulated from orientation through graduation. Undergraduate students are introduced to the Colorado Creed on the New Student Resources webpage, one of the orientation steps to complete for first-year students, transfer students and international students. The graduate student admission process emphasizes graduate students' role in furthering the university's research and teaching missions.

The recent Unified Student Experience project and End-to-End Student Engagement Communications pilot resulted in a new student Buff Portal and continue to inform how the university is working to increase technology-aided awareness of the aims, accomplishments and resources of CU Boulder among students and alumni. And in the Commencement program, the chancellor writes: "As you set your sights

on new professional and personal ambitions, my hope is that you will pursue each with honor, integrity and accountability, as the Colorado Creed reminds us."

1.B.1. The institution's actions and decisions demonstrate that its educational role is to serve the public, not solely the institution or any superordinate entity.

1.B.1. Through teaching, research, creative work and outreach, CU Boulder serves the public in the state of Colorado, the western United States, the nation and the world, fulfilling its mission as a research university committed to the public good.

Curriculum

CU Boulder's mission highlights the university's "responsibility for educating the next generation of citizens and leaders," a clear statement of our commitment to serving the public by preparing an educated citizenry. That commitment is manifested by the work of every academic degree program. In addition, in response to a central recommendation of the Academic Futures report (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.), the university embarked in 2021 on defining for the first time a set of learning outcomes that would be common to all undergraduate schools, colleges and degree programs (see 3.B.). One of the framing questions in creating the Common Curriculum is, "What do outside stakeholders (employers, alumni, policymakers/regulators, the public) expect our students to learn & know?" The planning committee explored this question in open fora that engaged alumni and interested external constituents and incorporated their perspectives into the framework. The Common Curriculum is entitled "Sustainable Futures: Self, Society, World" and coheres around the following statement of what the faculty aim to impart to students: "At CU Boulder, students will gain an understanding of the interdependence of individual, societal and environmental wellbeing and of the necessity for stewardship and solutions to advance balanced, just and equitable futures for all. Throughout their CU Boulder education, students will cultivate skills and habits of mind that enable them to thrive as individuals and contribute to a thriving world." CU Boulder adopted the Common Curriculum on February 1, 2023, and implementation is ongoing.

Scholarship, creative work and discovery

Research and creative work are part of CU Boulder's statutory mission; they are also an essential part of the university's devotion to the public good. Whether or not they have immediate practical application, the increase of human knowledge and the addition to the world of original creative works benefit humankind. So does the transmission of knowledge and artistic craft to future generations in the form of effective teaching. We expect our students to leave CU Boulder fully equipped with the tools, the capacity and—perhaps most important—the desire to be informed, engaged citizens and thoughtful, curious human beings. We also hope they will impart this love of learning as they in turn mentor future generations. When CU Boulder faculty members are the first to confirm that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted through the air, invent a breathalyzer based on frequency comb spectroscopy quantum technology that can "sniff out" diseases in real time, or join with Native American scholars to reassess the historical date by which horses spread throughout the American West, the university celebrates not

only its accolades but also its abilities to push research, scholarship and creative achievement past old boundaries toward new horizons.

Both basic and applied research tie CU Boulder to a network of research organizations that serve the public good in a national and international context. CU Boulder's [12 research institutes](#)—the oldest two, the [Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP)](#) and the [Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR)](#), founded in 1948 and 1951, respectively; the newest, the [Renée Crown Wellness Institute](#), founded in 2019—are renowned for interdisciplinary research in the sciences, social sciences, engineering and education. Together, the research institutes generated more than half of [CU Boulder's approximately $684 million in research funding in FY 2022–23](#). Three research institutes exist in partnership with federal laboratories: [JILA](#), with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST); the [Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES)](#), with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); and the [Renewable and Sustainable Energy Institute (RASEI)](#), with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL).

While federal agency funding for research at CU Boulder is holding strong, funding from industry, other universities, international partners and philanthropy also continues to grow, constituting approximately $198 million (29%) of CU Boulder research funding in FY 2022–23. Furthermore, partnerships with federal agencies and industry are not mutually exclusive, just as basic and applied research are not mutually exclusive. For example, the [CUbit Quantum Initiative](#), founded in 2018 as a local triad of CU Boulder, the NIST Quantum Physics Division (a core component of JILA) and Front Range companies, advances fundamental science and builds a strong foundation for novel quantum technologies and their rapid dissemination, application and commercialization.

CU Boulder has also been actively involved in highlighting the implications for public access to federally funded research, reflecting many years and dedication of faculty, researchers and staff to make the artifacts of our research accessible to the public. The campus as a whole has been working actively in this area for many years, not only in light of the recent [Office of Science & Technology Policy (OSTP) Nelson Memo](#) and earlier mandates from agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, but also in response to a 2013 shared governance-driven [open access mandate](#) for research that is created on the Boulder campus. This mandate drove early implementation of a library-based public-facing open access research repository ([CU Scholar](#)) for the entire CU Boulder community as well as a public-facing current research information system ([CU Experts](#)), which, along with our [Petalibrary](#) (research data archival infrastructure), serve as the primary means for scholars on the Boulder campus to disseminate open and accessible copies of its research (articles, book chapters, data). CU Boulder is part of one of the [initial 10 NSF Open Science Projects](#) funded from the new NSF Public Access Initiative, and the CU Scholar repository is one of the few North American institutional repositories that is a [CoreTrustSeal](#) certified [repository](#).

Economic and workforce contributions

Through its education of students across the spectrum of disciplines at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, CU Boulder supports the Board of Regents definition of the University of Colorado's mission to "strive to meet the educational and workforce needs of Colorado and its citizens." Proposals for new degrees take workforce needs into account (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.). Postgraduation surveys of careers and salaries for holders of both [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) degrees demonstrate CU Boulder students' success in the workforce.

CU Boulder's presence and activities have a robust positive impact on the health of the Colorado economy. A [Leeds School of Business 2023 study](#) demonstrated that, in FY 2022–23, CU Boulder had an

impact (direct, indirect, induced) on the Colorado economy of $4.3 billion. That impact derives in part from the university's students and employees as an economic and labor engine in the Boulder area; by university nonlabor operating expenditures that have an impact throughout the region, and by the university as a driver of visits to the local economy, attracting prospective students, families, fans and academic conference attendees to Boulder. Another important part of that economic activity arises directly through CU Boulder's sponsorship of innovation and entrepreneurship, another component of the University of Colorado mission as defined by the Board of Regents (1.A.1.). CU Boulder is a national leader in serving the public through its translation of university research and discovery into public impact through technological innovations, research-based startups and industry partnerships. Some recent achievements reflecting how our core educational and research missions power public impact include:

- A [2022 study by the Leeds School of Business](#) found that CU Boulder-led [commercialization activities drove an economic impact of $8 billion nationally and $5.2 billion in the state of Colorado](#) over the previous five years. This level of activity supported an estimated average of 7,800 jobs per year over the five-year period, paying an estimated $3.1 billion in labor income.
- In 2023, the University of Colorado system [ranked fifth in the nation for launching startups](#), ahead of innovation powerhouses MIT and Stanford; 20 of the 25 CU startups accounted for in this ranking originated at CU Boulder.
- In 2024, the CU system [ranked #14 among U.S. universities in translating innovation into impact](#) by the National Academy of Inventors; CU Boulder accounted for more than half of the patents recorded in this ranking.
- CU Boulder is a core contributor to two large-scale efforts underway to translate innovation into impact through industry partnerships, workforce development and a range of translation activities: in 2023, the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration designated Colorado's Elevate Quantum consortium a Regional Technology Hub for Quantum Information Technology; and in 2024, the [Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine](#) (in which CU Boulder is a founding partner) was chosen for one of ten first-ever NSF Regional Innovation awards given to teams spanning universities, nonprofits, businesses and other organizations.

In 2019, CU Boulder was designated an [Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) University](#) by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). IEP designees demonstrate a significant, sustainable and university-wide commitment to economic engagement through (1) talent and workforce development; (2) innovation, entrepreneurship and technology-based economic development; and (3) place development via public service, outreach and community engagement.

Affordability and financial stewardship

Creating greater public access to a first-class education is an important part of CU Boulder's mission, and keeping tuition affordable is key to that access. As set by the Board of Regents, CU Boulder base tuition rates (including mandatory fees) for Colorado residents increased by a total of 8.7% from FY 2018-19 to 2023-24, much less than the [U.S. cumulative rate of inflation](#) during this period.

CU Boulder has also made decisions as a financially independent university to maximize affordability and to maximize transparency around costs, allowing students and their families to plan ahead. CU Boulder is in its eighth year of its undergraduate [tuition and mandatory fee guarantee](#): the tuition and fee scales applicable to an entering undergraduate student pertain for four years of education, with no increases. As of AY 2018–19, [CU Boulder eliminated student fees](#) related to particular courses and programs,

retaining only mandatory fees. In AY 2023–24, CU Boulder instituted the [CU Book Access](#) program, which provides degree-seeking undergraduate students access to all required course materials before the first day of class for a flat-rate price of $279 (plus tax) per semester. Students may opt out of the program at any time before the course drop deadline, without penalty.

CU Boulder directs financial aid toward the students who need it most. [CU Promise](#) grants guarantee Pell Grant-eligible students (typically with a family-adjusted gross income of $65,000 or less) funding to pay full tuition and fees, plus work-study employment eligibility. The CU Promise grants were greatly expanded in AY 2023-24 (see 1.A.4.). Although students receiving Pell grants accounted for 14% of degree-seeking undergraduates in AY 2022–23, they received 39% ($42.3 million) of [total institutional grants and scholarships](#) ($108.1 million).

[Student loan debt is relatively low](#). Of CU Boulder bachelor's degree recipients in FY 2022–23 who were Colorado residents, about 42% had student loan debt, a significant decline from the percentage among FY 2017–18 graduates (50%); among these students, the median loan debt was $16,500 for students in the "highest need" financial aid category, between $21,900 and $24,500 for those in the next three categories of need, and $11,500 for those in the "lowest need" category. About 27% of nonresident bachelor's recipients graduated with student loan debt that year; among these students, the median loan debt was $27,200 for students in the "highest need" financial aid category, between $21,500 and $27,000 for those in the next three categories of need, and $43,700 for those in the "lowest need" category. The Bursar's Office recently developed several programs to support students with paying their bills, providing grants to assist with or cover outstanding balances. Examples include:

- Increasing [payment plan offerings](#) and flexing enrollment deadlines to allow students more flexibility
- Extending the payment plan options to Study Abroad students
- Raising the enrollment threshold (previously $50, now $1500) so that students can register for classes with larger [past-due balances](#)
- Allowing students to roll their past-due balances into payment plans for the current semester
- Providing [more payment options](#) and self-service account management for students with past-due debt

By far the largest contribution to CU Boulder's general fund comes from student tuition. Using those tuition dollars wisely—like the wise use of public funding, sponsored research funds and donor gifts—helps CU Boulder fulfill the University of Colorado's mission to "uphold ethical standards and steward the university's resources responsibly." See 2.A.2., 2.B.1., 5.B.3. and 5.B.4. for details about CU Boulder's fiscal standards and practices.

Higher education in Colorado, the West and the nation

Both as part of the University of Colorado system and an academically comprehensive research university, CU Boulder is committed to the good of public higher education in Colorado, the western United States and the nation. CU Boulder engages with the Colorado legislature on matters affecting higher education, including advocating to maintain and increase state funding support, and CU Boulder administrators serve on [Colorado Department of Higher Education institutional groups](#). CU Boulder especially works in partnership with two four-year public institutions serving rural western Colorado, Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado University, to offer engineering degrees (see 3.A.3.).

The good of the Boulder community

CU Boulder has had unprecedented opportunities in recent years to employ its research expertise in direct service to the Boulder area. During the pandemic, the university partnered with the city and county to combat the public health crisis. In fall 2020, CU Boulder completed 74,267 COVID-19 monitoring tests and 16,067 PCR diagnostic tests, followed by 107,283 monitoring and 11,598 PCR tests in spring 2021. The campus case investigation and contact tracing team distributed over 21,000 at-home antigen test kits and worked with over 6,500 cases on behalf of Boulder County Public Health, logging thousands of emails and phone calls, providing appropriate resource referrals, and reducing exposure to the broader community. CU Boulder also partnered with Boulder County and the State of Colorado to increase vaccine access for community members through multiple events, reducing the burden on local medical providers. The university's masking and vaccine requirements (resulting in approximately a 95% vaccination rate), comprehensive testing protocols, and case investigation and contact tracing reduced overall exposure on campus and indirectly throughout the region.

Assessment and Improvement

The university cannot rest on its many laurels regarding fulfilling its mission of contributing to the public good. Following its 2023 review of the Division of Academic Affairs (DAA), the CU Boulder Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) acknowledged the division's efforts to serve the public good, especially during the pandemic, but saw room for improvement. ARPAC recommended that the DAA should more clearly define and communicate the concept of "public good," enhance its leadership in setting public service objectives, and improve the assessment of public-oriented initiatives. The committee urged the DAA to seek alternative funding models due to reduced state funding and to better integrate and support public scholarship and engagement across the university. ARPAC also emphasized the need for stronger measures to protect academic freedom amid increasing pressures. The committee expects to hear back from the division's leaders on the progress made in implementing these recommendations over the next three years.

1.B.2. The institution's educational responsibilities take primacy over other purposes, such as generating financial returns for investors, contributing to a related or parent organization, or supporting external interests.

1.B.2. As the University of Colorado's flagship, CU Boulder serves the state of Colorado and is focused solely on the university's educational and research responsibilities as defined in its statutory mission (see 1.A.1.) and on wisely using the dollars entrusted to the university by taxpayers and tuition-paying students and families. CU Boulder is not answerable or beholden to any investors, related or parent organization or external interest. CU Boulder is part of the four-campus University of Colorado System, but the chancellor of CU Boulder is responsible for operations, and CU Boulder faculty have the principal role in determining curriculum and other academic matters (see 2.C.4.). While CU Boulder participates in NCAA Division 1 sports as part of the Pac-12 conference (shifting to the Big 12 conference in 2024-25), the Athletics Department and its Herbst Academic Center ensure that student-athletes understand that academics come first and are equipped with the tools and support systems for academic success. The overall GPA of CU Boulder student athletes has surpassed 3.0 in the past nine semesters, with the football team notably achieving its best-ever cumulative GPA in spring 2024, hitting the 3.0 mark for the first time in school history. For the entering cohort of 2017, the six-year graduation rate of student athletes exceeded that of the campus average for all sports teams except two (men's basketball and men's cross-country/track).

1.B.3. The institution engages with its external constituencies and responds to their needs as its mission and capacity allow.

1.B.3.

Local constituencies

CU Boulder's identity as a public flagship conveys a special responsibility upon the university, both to the current inhabitants of the area and to the area's history. In 2022, the university adopted a [land acknowledgment statement](#) recognizing that Colorado's flagship campus sits on land that is part of the traditional territories of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Ute and other Indigenous nations with historic and ongoing ties to the state. Additionally, the land acknowledgment honors the contributions of all Indigenous peoples with historic ties to Colorado; recognizes the devastating and lasting impacts of the forced removal of tribal nations from their ancestral homelands and their assimilation and confinement on reservations to create what is now the state of Colorado; and affirms CU Boulder's commitment to amplifying the voices of Indigenous students, staff and faculty, integrating Indigenous knowledge into education, research and student success, and working with Native American communities to recruit, retain and graduate Indigenous students.

CU Boulder is committed to forging and improving relations with Native American tribes (with specific attention to those with historic and cultural ties to what is now the state of Colorado). The university has created a new position, the [associate vice chancellor for Native American Affairs](#), to help the campus to learn about the tribes, identify areas of partnership and collaboration, and share how the university can support the well-being of the tribes. Goals for the campus include being in relation with tribal leadership, amplifying Indigenous knowledge, improving campus climate and supporting the success of Native American students, staff and faculty. One example of recent action is the university's [2023 Memo of Understanding with the Southern Ute Tribe](#) revitalizing the University of Colorado Boulder's commitment to Native American students, providing scholarships covering in-state tuition for up to four students each year. The university's renewed dedication to the 1990 agreement with the Southern Ute Tribe demonstrates a commitment to honoring past promises and fostering collaboration with indigenous communities, while also creating a $850,000 Native American and Indigenous Student Support Endowment to continue to fund students in the future.

CU Boulder also engages directly with the local community and local governments regarding issues that affect the university and the community alike. Most prominent among current issues is the City of Boulder's 2021 annexation of [CU Boulder South](#), a 308-acre property the university has owned since 1996. The annexation agreement reflects years of public input from Boulder residents and highlights the university's commitment to tackling urgent community concerns such as flood mitigation, limited housing, increasing dedicated open space, and other matters. The university also hosts a quarterly meeting with diversity, equity and inclusion leaders from the City of Boulder, Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) and Boulder County to identify opportunities for collaboration. CU Boulder is part of a regional economic vitality group that includes city and county government, the Chamber of Commerce and related groups. To strengthen the connection between students and the City of Boulder, the university has launched [CU in the City](#) Community Scholars, which provides undergraduate students with a distinctive learning experience through paid internships within the City of Boulder government offices and in roles with Boulder County and local nonprofits.

In addition to fostering town-gown relations, CU Boulder serves the public in meaningful ways that bring the community together, provide needed services, and extend the university's mission of shared learning, scholarship, discovery and creative work.

Many academic programs at CU Boulder serve the community directly as an integral part of its mission and identity. The Department of Psychology and Neuroscience and the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences sponsor low-cost clinics in psychotherapy; attention, behavior and learning; and audiology, speech and language services. The law school maintains nine clinics that provide legal counsel to clients on topics ranging from juvenile and family law to water rights to legal matters affecting American Indians. The Leeds School of Business offers tax preparation assistance for low-income community residents.

CU Boulder offers a number of educational programs directly to the public at little or no cost. Through the Continuing Education Auditors program, community members may audit a wide selection of courses. Continuing Education also offers free "CU on the Weekend" lectures, and English language and U.S. culture courses for both CU students and members of the community. Non-degree-seeking students are eligible for scholarships through Continuing Education. Likewise, CU Science Discovery supports the university's outreach and engagement mission by connecting K-12 youth, educators, families and other public audiences with current science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) research happening at CU Boulder. Working collaboratively with school districts and community organizations across the state, Science Discovery engages K-12 audiences in both in-school and out-of-school-time STEM experiences, such as summer camps, afterschool programs, educator professional development workshops, field science programs, and more. Through grant-funded partnerships, Science Discovery broadens participation in STEM fields by expanding access to STEM enrichment programming to youth from under-resourced backgrounds. Combined, Science Discovery's STEM education outreach programs impact thousands of K-12 youth and hundreds of educators across Colorado each year.

Other educational opportunities are offered at CU Boulder through the myriad lectures, symposia, panel discussions, concerts, performances and other events, many of them free of charge. The Center of the American West, the Center for Humanities and the Arts, the Byron R. White Center for the Study of American Constitutional Law and the College of Music Faculty Tuesdays series are just a few of the university organizations that sponsor events that are free and open to the public. Each spring, the Conference on World Affairs week features over 200 events and more than 100 speakers and performers, attracting more than 70,000 attendees each year. And in 2022, CU Boulder, United Nations Human Rights, and the Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Alliance co-hosted a three-day global climate summit addressing human rights and climate change. Held on campus and in various locations throughout Boulder, the Right Here, Right Now Global Climate Summit drew more than 4,500 registered attendees representing 99 countries on all inhabited continents.

Outreach and engagement

A current inventory shows no fewer than 260 programs and services at CU Boulder devoted to outreach and public engagement, extending to every region of the state of Colorado. Just a few examples include education programs offered at Mesa Verde National Park by the CU Boulder Museum of Natural History; viewing events at the Sommers-Bausch Observatory and Fiske Planetarium; and the Colorado Shakespeare Festival's "Shakespeare and Violence Prevention" tours in Colorado schools. Programs allied under the CU Engage banner in the School of Education focus on projects that integrate student learning in academic courses with community engagement. The Office for Public and Community-Engaged Scholarship provides resources and services to help faculty and staff as well as nonprofits, K–12 schools, colleges and universities, government agencies and other community partners develop outreach partnership opportunities. These resources and services include workshops and trainings, network development, assistance with program and proposal design, access to experts and outreach communications support, and grants and seed funding for outreach projects. After the 2021 Marshall

Fire devastated Boulder County, for example, the office collaborated with the CU Boulder Research and Innovation Office and the Natural Hazards Center to provide more than [$30,000 in funding](#) to support research projects that assist area communities with wildfire prevention and recovery.

CU Boulder faculty, students, staff and alumni demonstrate a spirit of public engagement that extends far beyond the confines of campus or of a particular degree program or job description. Every year, CU Boulder is one of the top universities for [graduates who join the Peace Corps](#) (see 4.A.6.). CU Boulder was the founding institution for [Engineers Without Borders](#). The [Boulder County Latino History Project](#), initiated by a team including community Latinx volunteers and a CU Boulder Distinguished Professor emerita, has grown into [a statewide project](#) to preserve and communicate Latinx history in Colorado communities. The [CU Boulder Natural Hazards Center](#) acts as a clearinghouse for research that will save lives and mitigate damage worldwide. These are just a few examples of how the CU Boulder community takes the university's mission of serving the public into the world.

All CU Boulder alumni are members of the [CU Boulder Alumni Association](#), with no membership dues required. This 300,000-strong network of Forever Buffs affords many opportunities to engage with the university and alumni through meaningful experiences, benefits, global communities and stories. Alumni can receive free career advice from the [Alumni Career Services](#) team, find and engage with CU Boulder [communities](#) around the world, attend [campus events](#) like Homecoming, join the free [Forever Buffs Network](#) for CU-exclusive online networking and mentorship opportunities, and read the latest CU Boulder news via the award-winning [*Coloradan* alumni magazine](#). Inspiring meaningful public impact and engagement through experiences like these form a core pillar of [CU Boulder Advancement](#)'s [FY24–26 Strategic Framework](#).

1.C.1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.

1.C.1.

Informed citizenship

CU Boulder's preparation of students for informed citizenship is founded in the university's steadfast commitment to freedom of speech and to academic freedom. In 2018, the Board of Regents amended Regent Law Article 1 to codify that "All members of the [University of Colorado] community, defined as the Regents of the University of Colorado, the officers of the university and the administration, and the university's faculty, staff, and students, have a responsibility to protect the university as a forum for the free expression of ideas" ([Article 1.E.1.](#)). In addition, Regent Law defines the university's commitment to academic freedom for both faculty and students in the course of their teaching, learning, research, scholarship and creative work ([Article 5.B.2.](#) and [Article 7.C.](#)). First and foremost, CU Boulder works to educate students about the distinction between their First Amendment right to freedom of speech and their rights and responsibilities regarding academic freedom. The Division of Student Affairs is central to this educational process, providing students resources to [understand these rights and responsibilities](#), [engage in productive discussion](#) with others who hold different beliefs, and [participate responsibly](#) in activism or protest. Student Affairs administers [CU Boulder's Student Code of Conduct](#) and works with

[registered student organizations](#) in order to help students enact these principles when engaging with others.

Through the university's curricula, CU Boulder's faculty facilitate students' learning about informed civic engagement along with their direct participation. Each year, CU Boulder submits to the Board of Regents [a report](#) on student enrollment in lower-division courses related to U.S. and comparative government and students' participation in other civics-related educational activities. Student numbers in these courses and programs are steadily high. Along with student internships in local government (see 1.B.3.), CU Boulder's CU in DC program represents a long-established institutional commitment to enable students to live and learn in the nation's hotbed of political and policy work while earning university credits. In 2021, [the program](#) transitioned out of the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) into Education Abroad, to broaden its scope beyond A&S and attract participation from students in all schools and colleges. [The current program,](#) operated in partnership with [The Washington Center](#), offers mentorship from the Washington, DC, chapter of the CU Boulder alumni association, career readiness training and internship opportunities. Finally, the faculty have defined "Preparing to Advance a Diverse Democracy" as one of the learning objectives of CU Boulder's new Common Curriculum (see 1.B.1., 3.B.1. and 3.B.2): "CU Boulder students will know how to make positive contributions to a diverse world as citizens and leaders engaged in their communities. Citizenship involves developing an orientation to the public good—understanding that this concept is always contested—and a commitment to democratic processes to address differences. Leadership involves promoting collaboration, motivating others, valuing diverse perspectives, and elevating the strengths of individuals. As committed citizens and leaders, students will recognize how histories, cultures, and values shape identities, practices, and social positionings; will understand that engagement can take many forms across different communities and cultures; and will engage productively across differences to identify and address barriers to inclusion, equity, and sustainability."

Through its Residential Life cocurricular programs and its sponsorship of student organizations, the Division of Student Affairs also has an important role in educating students about the nature of citizenship in a diverse community. The [mission of Student Affairs](#) is to develop and implement innovative programs and services that positively impact student success, retention and graduation rates, engagement and campus climate; developing students' sense of community is paramount to achieving this mission. Some highlights of how Student Affairs has done this include the implementation of Fall Welcome, a series of events to introduce students to campus and connect with others; and the [Residential Experience](#), which promotes four core components: academic responsibility, community responsibility, social justice responsibility and personal responsibility. (Note: first-year students are required to live on campus).

One important gauge of students' learning to participate as informed citizens in a diverse democracy— perhaps the most important gauge of all—is the number and percentage of students who vote. CU Boulder is proud to have been recognized by the [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#) as a 2022 [ALL IN Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting](#), which recognizes colleges and universities for making intentional efforts to increase student voter participation. In 2020, CU Boulder was recognized by the ALL IN Challenge with a platinum award fora student voter turnout of more than 80%.

Workforce success

Preparing students for workforce success begins at the time a new degree is proposed; market projections are part of the proposal process. In the last decade, CU Boulder has developed a number of new professional master's degree programs that are specifically directed to those seeking to polish their workplace skills, either in advance of or after gaining work experience. Joining long-established professional degrees such as the MBA and JD, these new professional master's degrees, offered both in person and online, are clustered primarily in the engineering disciplines, but also include areas such as the environment, outdoor recreation economy, corporate communication, supply chain management, and data science. Our innovative online postbaccalaureate degree in applied computer science is specifically designed for students, many of them already in the workforce, who wish to make a career pivot. Along with degree options, the university also offers graduate certificates for working professionals in areas ranging from architectural lighting to applied Shakespeare.

In addition, CU Boulder offers four professional master's degrees (in electrical engineering, data science, engineering management, and computer science) through the Coursera learning platform in correspondence education asynchronous modality. The programs mirror the existing residential master's degree programs in these fields and differ only in that they are offered through the Coursera platform (see 3.A.3.). These scaled Coursera degree offerings enable us to reach students both in North America and globally that we could not reach through a physical or even hybrid modality: we do not have enough physical resources on campus to support all the students who wish to enroll in these high-demand degree programs, and most students in the Coursera programs are new majority learners (working adults) ranging in age from 25-40 who cannot come to campus to take courses. These degrees all feature stackable certificates and performance-based admissions, which includes a three-course admissions track where the student is required to earn a B or higher in the track to be admitted to the degree program. The curricula of these programs focus on workforce success in these disciplinary areas through the acquisition of in-demand skills, offering many applied options for students to reinforce learning that will support their success in their careers.

Another innovative way in which CU Boulder is supporting student workforce preparation is the recent establishment of both for-credit and non-credit microcredentials. While traditional degrees and certificate programs recognize more robust programs of academic study, microcredentials recognize and document the acquisition of specific skills or competencies. Upon successful completion of a microcredential program, learners are issued a digital badge containing metadata about the program's requirements and learning objectives, as well as links to educational artifacts. This makes badges independently verifiable and portable, empowering learners to use, share and display their credentials however they see fit. For example, students may earn digital badges attesting to their skills acquisition in leadership, communication, arts administration, or machine learning. Microcredentials for graduate students include, for example, certification that they have completed a research data bootcamp or training in college-level teaching. In another program similar to microcredentials, CU Boulder has partnered with Google to offer students and recent graduates the opportunity to earn free online career certificates in technical subjects (e.g., data analytics, project management, IT support and UX design) that are recognized credentials by many major employers. CU Boulder is the first four-year institution in Colorado to partner with Google to offer the Google Career Certificates program.

The mainstay of both undergraduate and graduate career preparation is our Career Services office, which assists students with career exploration, gaining professional skills and experience, and job searches and career fairs. Career Services also assists students with finding internships. Career Services

advisors are embedded in most of the schools and colleges, and the Graduate School and Career Services partner to provide resources particular to graduate students seeking both academic and non-academic career. The Leeds School of Business, Colorado Law, and the College of Engineering and Applied Science maintain their own career services offices. Alumni continue to have access to CU Boulder career services. Learners in our Coursera-based professional master's programs are offered virtual career service offerings, including virtual job fairs, through the Handshake platform, and they also have access to in-person networking through Hub City Meetups, held at least once a semester in Hub Cities (cities that feature many of our Coursera students) so that those students can meet their peers and their instructors and offer each other support from in-person social networking and peer interaction.

Postgraduation surveys of careers and salaries for holders of both undergraduate and graduate degrees demonstrate CU Boulder students' success in the workforce.

1.C.2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.

1.C.3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

1.C.2. and 1.C.3. Board of Regents policy 1.B. (see 1.A.1.) includes these actions among the guiding principles of the University of Colorado: (1) "encourag[ing] and provid[ing] access to the university for all qualified students within the university's capacity"; (2) "building a community of faculty, students, and staff in which diversity is a fundamental value" and (3) "provid[ing] an outstanding, respectful, and responsive living, learning, teaching, and working environment." Annually, CU Boulder and the other University of Colorado campuses report to the Board of Regents on diversity, one of the metrics through which the Board of Regents evaluates how each campus is supporting the Strategic Plan of the University of Colorado as a whole.

These guiding principles have also been part of CU Boulder's strategic planning. The Academic Futures report, released in 2018 (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.), endorsed the work in progress of what became the IDEA Plan (2019), which declared CU Boulder's fundamental commitment to addressing its role in a multicultural society and the multicultural nature of CU Boulder's own community of faculty, staff and students. The next step has been to take the IDEA Plan from plan to action. In 2021, the university created the new position of senior vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion to provide strategic direction for campuswide diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and programs as well as strategies for improving the campus culture. To establish a common set of guiding principles, a collaborative group that included the senior vice chancellor for DEI and members of the IDEA Council agreed upon the following priorities to advance diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus:

- Employee skills and development
- Student achievement outcomes
- Community building
- Employee recruitment outcomes
- Preparing students to participate in a diverse democracy

The results of the university's 2021 Campus Culture Survey, which included students, faculty and staff, provided a wealth of data indicating areas of both success and needed improvement for the climate for diverse groups. CU Boulder has now adopted a shared equity leadership model to provide a framework

for that action. Based on that framework, in spring 2022 academic and administrative unit leaders began using the results of the Campus Culture Survey and other resources to develop action plans to address challenges hindering the campus's ability to create and sustain a more inclusive community. Each unit leader was asked to choose one or two goals to improve student, staff and faculty outcomes in their respective areas, working closely with DEI consultants from the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to ensure their success.

Broadly speaking, the goals of these action plans are to promote greater diversity, equity and inclusion and to further support the academic, research and career success of students, faculty and staff with a focus on eliminating barriers disproportionately affecting people with minoritized identities and impacting their achievement, safety and sense of community. A publicly accessible Action Planning Dashboard is enabling the CU Boulder community to track the progress and celebrate the successes of administrative and academic units working to create more inclusive experiences for students, staff and faculty. The dashboard will also include action planning assessments in the future.

Other signs of this commitment are the many university programs, services and other efforts devoted to improving CU Boulder's accessibility to and education of a diverse student population, and creating a welcoming climate for students, staff and faculty from diverse populations. A final, important sign is CU Boulder's academic emphasis on human diversity, both within the Common Curriculum learning outcomes and school and college general education requirements and in the many disciplinary and interdisciplinary academic programs that address human diversity and multicultural societies (see 3.B.3.).

Student success: enrollment, retention and graduation

A number of pre-college outreach and engagement programs at CU Boulder work to recruit and prepare a diverse population of middle and high school students in Colorado and beyond to apply and succeed at CU Boulder or another postsecondary institution of their choice. Examples include the federally funded CU Upward Bound Program, which serves 103 high school students from 13 high schools located in or near urban and tribal communities in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and South Dakota; and the Bridge Scholars Program, which guides students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in navigating their transition into university to achieve a higher education degree. Individual colleges and schools also host programs to support the recruitment of diverse student populations at CU Boulder. The College of Music, for example, partners with the Sphinx Organization, a Detroit-based social justice organization focused on transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts, to host the Sphinx Performance Academy, a tuition-free solo and chamber music intensive that creates a pipeline for Black and Latinx string players under the age of 17 to the top conservatories and music colleges in the country, including CU Boulder's. Similarly, the College of Engineering and Applied Science hosts the EngiNear Me residential, on-campus summer program for rising high school seniors with an interest in engineering who may have had limited exposure to engineering throughout high school.

Achieving diversity and equity in admissions and enrollment is an ongoing goal. In the past decade, 2014 to 2023, the undergraduate student body has seen increases in the percentage of students from diverse US racial/ethnic groups (from 22% in 2014 to 28% in 2023), in the percentage of students from underrepresented diverse US racial/ethnic groups (from 14% in 2014 to 18% in 2023), and in the percentage of students who identify as female (from 44% in 2014 to 47% in 2023). However, the same years saw a decrease in the percentage of first-generation undergraduate students (from 17% in 2014 to 15% in 2023). The percentage of international undergraduate students rose from 5% in 2014 to 7% in 2017 but has since declined, standing at 3% in 2023.

To increase diversity and access in undergraduate admissions, the Office of Enrollment Management (EM) has recently made changes in application, admissions and financial aid processes. EM uses a student-centered model to consistently evaluate the Common App and how it can be adjusted to remove barriers for students. Recently, EM streamlined Common App questions, provided options for self-reporting GPA and providing unofficial transcripts, and adjusted questions to lower barriers for students with criminal and disciplinary violation history. The Office of Admissions has eight staff members who speak Spanish and many who speak other languages, offers admission sessions in multiple languages and is developing marketing materials in Spanish. Application fee waivers are offered for all Colorado residents, students with financial need, and other target populations, like TRIO students, Boettcher semifinalists, and students with extenuating circumstances (e.g., wildfires), and Free Application Days are held in the fall (for first-year students) and spring (for transfer students). CU Boulder has received a record number of applications for fall 2024, a 20% jump from the previous year, with applications from people who identify as Black or African American up 50%, applications from Latine students up 25%, and in-state applications up 16%.

Graduate student populations have increased in diversity in the last decade. The fall 2023 graduate student population was 44% female, an increase from 42% in 2014; 13% were members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, a significant increase from 9% in 2014; and 26% were international students, an increase from 19% in 2014. Graduate admissions are the purview of the individual departments and degree programs, and these increases are a credit to concerted effort on the part of those departments. In addition, the Graduate School sponsors the Colorado Diversity Initiative, an umbrella for several programs that encourage undergraduates from underrepresented groups to enter graduate STEM programs and mentors graduate students within those programs. Graduate application fees are waived for U.S. military veterans and for participants in a number of programs such as the Peace Corps or the McNair Scholars program, and no application fees are charged for applicants to our professional master's programs on the Coursera platform (see 1.C.1.). To make a graduate education more affordable, CU Boulder has made significant strides in raising compensation levels for graduate students on appointment. Following the 2019 recommendations of the Graduate Task Force on Stipends and Benefits (and following a short-term freeze on raises during the pandemic), the university has raised graduate student stipends in the range of 3-4% annually and remitted mandatory fees.

CU Boulder's tilt toward a male student population has been historically influenced by the university's strong reputation in STEM fields and by the shift in enrollments toward the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS), from 18% of the total student body in 2014 to 23% in 2023. It is thus significant that, in pursuit of the goals of its 2023 strategic vision, CEAS has made impressive advances in recruiting a diverse student population. Women were 27% of new first-year students in CEAS in 2014, and 41% in 2023. Similarly, CEAS has made strides in recruiting students who are members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, who made up 16% of new first-year students in CEAS in 2014 and 24% in 2023. The university, as a whole, made similar progress toward parity in recruiting. New first-year students in fall 2023 were 50% women, vs. 44% in 2014, and 19% were members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, vs. 16% in 2014.

Undergraduate student retention and graduation rates have improved significantly for CU Boulder's diverse student populations in the last decade, as they have for students as a whole. Comparing the cohorts entering as first-year students in 2013 and 2022 shows the difference. For undergraduate students who were members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, first-to-second-year retention improved from 81% (2013 cohort) to 85% (2022 cohort); for women students, from 85% (2013 cohort) to 89% (2022 cohort); and for first-generation students, from 77% (2013 cohort) to 84% (2022 cohort).

These improvements closely track the first-to-second-year retention rate for students as a whole, which improved from [84% (2013 cohort) to 89% (2022 cohort)](#).

These improved retention rates bode well for a future improvement in [six-year graduation rates](#), which have already improved both for students as a whole and for diverse student groups. Taking the same decade-long span for comparison purposes, the percentage of total students in the 2008 entering cohort who graduated in six years was 70%, whereas by the 2017 entering cohort, the percentage of students who graduated in six years had increased to 75%. For students who were members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, graduation rates for the same cohorts increased from 61% (2008 cohort) to 71% (2017 cohort); for women students, from 72% to 79%; for first-generation students, from 59% to 67%.

CU Boulder is proud of but not content with these improvements in student success. Several initiatives have led to strategic action. The 2018 [Foundations of Excellence strategic initiative,](#) which considered how to improve students' experience in their first year at CU Boulder and thus lay better groundwork for student success and graduation, led to the creation of a new [first-year advising model,](#) whose effectiveness is currently being assessed. Many of the recommendations of the subsequent [First Year Experience Transition Committee](#) (2019) and [Provost's Advisory Committee on Transfer Student Success](#) (2019) have been implemented; for example, housing assignments have been changed from first-housing-deposit-paid, first-served (which favored wealthier students) to randomized assignments, and a new [Pre-Transfer Advising](#) unit has been established to help transfer students position themselves for success at CU Boulder. More recently, the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative (see 1.A.5) has been [specifically charged](#) with policy and process improvement for underrepresented students from historically marginalized groups, from their first day on campus through the fourth semester. [Current BUS projects](#) include, for example, a math instruction/tutoring improvement design that will focus on courses with significant D/F/W rates and significant equity gaps.

Programs for students

In 2023, CU Boulder disaggregated the functions of the [former Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement](#) into various divisions and offices that would bring those services closer to the students who need and use them: Enrollment Management ([Pre-College Outreach & Engagement](#)), Student Affairs ([Center for Inclusion and Social Change](#)), the Graduate School ([Colorado Diversity Initiative](#)), and the Office of Undergraduate Education ([Student Academic Success Center](#) and the [CU LEAD Alliance](#)).The changes link these services with the efforts of key partners and provide better integration with existing campus resources to serve students more effectively. When students matriculate, they are supported by these universitywide resources and in programs in each college and school that are affiliated through the CU LEAD Alliance. Student support services for specific diverse groups—e.g., military veterans, students with disabilities, international students—are discussed in 3.B.3., 3.D.1. and 3.D.2. Many of the [450+ student organizations](#) funded by the CU Boulder Student Government are directed toward specific populations of students (for example, the CU Women in Business group and the Sikh Student Organization).

Disability Services (DS) ensures that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations and services to participate equally in the academic environment. DS offers [academic coaching](#) where students can work with a coach to set academic goals, increase their confidence in the classroom, master useful tools for everyday life and connect with campus resources that meet their individual needs. Throughout the academic year, DS hosts a number of [workshops and trainings](#) to help students with disabilities succeed at CU Boulder as well as prepare them for their transition to the workplace. The [Student Testing Center](#) supports students with accommodations with a welcoming space designed to meet their accommodation needs. DS partners with stakeholders to inform the CU community of

curricular and cocurricular activities for students and faculty. A few examples: "4 tips for navigating college with a disability," "5 ways faculty can support students with disabilities," and "Note-taking strategies every student should try."

CU Boulder has taken significant new steps since the 2019-20 Assurance Review to ensure that faculty are trained in effective teaching and mentoring of all students. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), established in 2020 (see 3.C.5.), provides numerous resources to support faculty in teaching more inclusively: designing classroom spaces, pedagogical practices, and course content that foster success for all students. In addition to online resources, including a podcast, the CTL offers microcredentials in Inclusive Research Mentoring (in partnership with the Graduate School) Just & Equitable Teaching, Teaching International Students (in partnership with Undergraduate Education), and Universal Design for Learning (in partnership with Continuing Education). The CTL's Inclusive Community Practice's monthly meeting provides an opportunity for educators across campus to network, as well as share effective practices.

Faculty and staff

CU Boulder's recruitment practices, evaluation procedures and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff focus on diversity and inclusion as contributing to CU Boulder's strategic imperatives and as essential to CU Boulder's fulfillment of its mission. To prepare students to live in a diverse democracy, CU Boulder itself must build such a community. This commitment begins in employee recruitment efforts. Many position announcements state that the "University of Colorado Boulder is committed to building a culturally diverse community of faculty, staff, and students dedicated to contributing to an inclusive campus environment. We are an Equal Opportunity employer, including veterans and individuals with disabilities." Anyone who votes on tenured/tenure-track faculty hires and anyone who participates in non-tenure-track faculty hires must participate in training for inclusive faculty searches, and similar training is part of the staff hiring process. Supervisors are trained to onboard employees in ways that introduce them to the mission and values of the university, and all employees have access to diversity learning and development courses and tools. The Center for Inclusion and Social Change offers "Safe Zone" workshops to provide faculty and staff with the skills to create inclusive learning and work environments for people of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

After a period of flat trends, faculty and staff diversity has made some progress in the last decade (2014–2023). The percentage of female-identified instructional faculty has increased from 41% to 44% in this period, as has the percentage identifying as members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups (8% in 2014, 11% in 2023). Research faculty were 40% women in 2014 and 42% women in 2023, and 5% members of underrepresented racial/ethnic groups in 2014 and 7% in 2023. Staff (both classified and university/exempt staff) were 57% women in 2010 and 56% in 2018; staff who were members of underrepresented minority groups were 17% of the total in 2010 and 16% in 2018. In terms of the representation of diverse groups among faculty and staff, then, CU Boulder still has work to do to initiate an upward trajectory. At the leadership level, significant change has taken place. Officers of the university were 27% women and 12% members of underrepresented minority groups in 2014, whereas they were 50% women and 17% members of underrepresented minority groups in 2023.

In order to implement the recommendations embodied in the IDEA Plan's Action Area #2, "Learn and Lead Effective Efforts to Attract and Retain a More Diverse Faculty and Staff," the Provost's Office, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) and the Office of Faculty Affairs, initiated the Faculty Diversity Action Plan (FDAP) in 2020. The three rounds of the program, now called the Critical Needs Hiring Program, were successful, resulting in approximately 30 new faculty who meet critical needs in research and teaching across campus. In 2023, the deans of the schools and colleges expressed the desire to revise the program so that it would provide the schools and colleges with more autonomy and flexibility in meeting the goals of the FDAP, and more opportunities for cluster hires. Over the next three years, funding for the Critical Needs Hiring Program (CNHP) will provide ~$1M in salary + benefits to be allocated across 32 centrally funded faculty positions (up to $100K in salary + benefits per position). During the same period, to foster ownership of and commitment to the CNHP across all academic units, the schools and colleges are required to fund 48 critical needs faculty positions, pooled across all units, to be completed by FY 2027.

CU Boulder has recently undertaken additional new steps to help ensure that all employees feel valued and equitably treated. In 2022, the campus moved to equalize parental leave benefits among different employee groups. All employee groups are now eligible for the benefit upon their start date (which previously applied only to tenured/tenure-track faculty). In addition, the Office of Faculty Affairs encourages chairs and deans to allow tenure-track faculty members who assume exceptional caregiving responsibilities to apply for modification in workload for up to one semester in the term immediately preceding or following parental leave. Effective 2024, eligible employees can receive up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave, with an additional four weeks leave for complications during pregnancy or childbirth, under CU's private Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI) program. FAMLI interacts with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as well as CU's Parental Leave policies. A team has been established to help employees navigate all leave programs for which they are eligible (including other state leave programs).

Campus community

A number of new or recently expanded centers and services available to the entire campus demonstrate CU Boulder's commitment to build an inclusive, respectful community for all. Some examples:

- The university's mission to educate and serve the people of Colorado has been significantly furthered through its 2021 establishment and support of the Center for African & African American Studies (CAAAS), which provides a locus around which African and African American Studies innovations and achievements can be showcased and shared with students, faculty and the general public. Moreover, the CAAAS has helped to put CU Boulder's IDEA Plan into action in two areas of campus life and culture that CU has been working to strengthen for decades: (1) recruiting and retaining African and African American faculty and students; and (2) community

- outreach to, and engagement with, Africans, African Americans and Africana allies in the Boulder community and broader Denver metropolitan area.
- The online CU Boulder campus map now includes information on inclusive resources including the locations of affinity spaces, all gender bathrooms, and lactation rooms.
- The university's Digital Accessibility Policy and Campus Standards have been updated, and the Digital Accessibility Office (DAO) has been moved to the organization of the Office of Information Technology to integrate its work with IT efforts across campus. The DAO provides usability testing to ensure IT systems are accessible by individuals with disabilities, supports specific individuals with digital technology (e.g., captioning) in collaboration with the Disability Services and ADA offices, and educates campus community members about their responsibilities for digital accessibility.
- The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) provides language interpretation for understanding university policies and support resources in accordance with CU Boulder's Limited English Proficiency Plan and supports requesting ADA accommodations (disability and pregnancy), reporting a concern regarding discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse, or stalking, and accessing vital documents.
- The Basic Needs Center, established in 2022 as part of the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative (see 1.A.5.), supports the mission of the university through student staff and volunteer programs that contribute to service of meeting the basic needs of our campus population. Students learn to lead the programs and directly support the center's services by making decisions, providing input, and determining what resources will be best for their fellow Buffs. These programs, including the Buff Pantry and Mobile Food Pantries, serve people from across many different social identity groups and nationalities and support all undergraduate and graduate students experiencing basic needs insecurity. Thousands of students have accessed the center's resources, and hundreds of staff and community members have also been able to meet their basic needs more effectively.
- In 2023, CU Boulder adopted the Okanagan Charter. As a Health Promoting University, CU Boulder commits to the Okanagan Charter Calls to Action through three key themes: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Climate and Sustainability, and a Culture of Well-Being. In order to implement these commitments, the CU Well-Being Collective has been established to utilize a systems-level approach that considers the intersection of people (students, staff, faculty and administrators), place (the CU Boulder campus/community), and planet (our built environment/natural resources). The CU Well-Being Collective contributes to fostering a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators by taking a multi-disciplinary, intersectional, and systems-level approach to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and operations.

It is important to emphasize that Regent Policy 1.B.'s guiding principle that the University of Colorado will "ensure policies, programs, procedures and practices promote a continuing commitment to building a community of faculty, students, and staff in which diversity is a fundamental value" goes on to state that "such policies, programs and procedures will also serve to ensure the rich interchange of ideas in the pursuit of truth and learning, including diversity of political, geographic, cultural, intellectual, and philosophical perspectives." CU Boulder's commitment to upholding and fostering freedom of speech and academic freedom is thus inextricable from its commitment to maintaining a culture of respect for the diverse populations that are part of the university's community. Chancellor DiStefano's recent statements and opinion pieces on public issues in higher education emphasize the role of the university

in maintaining democracy's commitment to individual rights, including freedom of speech, as well as the role of the university as a marketplace for the free and respectful exchange of ideas and the pursuit of truth in discovery, learning and the creation of art.

1.Summary.

In addition to the general mission of the University of Colorado as four campuses serving the state of Colorado and its residents, CU Boulder has a well-defined mission as Colorado's flagship public university for research and graduate education. To realize its mission in its vision and actions as a university, CU Boulder has articulated three strategic imperatives: shape tomorrow's leaders, be the top university for innovation and positively impact humanity. These strategic imperatives underlie the primary initiative through which CU Boulder is currently planning its future, Academic Futures, as well as the initiatives in support of Academic Futures for student success, enrollment management, financial resilience, and diversity, equity and inclusion. They also underlie CU Boulder's daily operations, including the efforts of faculty, staff and students to serve a diverse community in the state, the nation and the world through education, research, creative work, outreach, economic and workforce development, and public engagement.

Criterion 2. Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct
The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A. The institution establishes and follows policies and processes to ensure fair and ethical behavior on the part of its governing board, administration, faculty and staff.

2.A.1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.

2.A.1. As detailed in 1.A.1., CU Boulder's vision is grounded in its statutory mission as a national public research university. In Colorado statute, first adopted in 1963 to differentiate the roles of the different University of Colorado campuses, CU Boulder is defined as a "comprehensive graduate research university with selective admissions standards . . . offer[ing] a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master and doctoral degree programs" (CRS § 23-20-101). CU Boulder's students, both graduate and undergraduate, benefit from the comprehensive mix of programs and research excellence that characterize a flagship public state university. Thus, CU Boulder's statutory mission is as relevant today as it was when it was first established and will remain relevant in the future.

The University of Colorado Board of Regents recognizes the exceptional opportunities associated with CU Boulder's role as a comprehensive research university and as the system flagship, and values the unique strength and character that research and creative achievements bring to both graduate and undergraduate education at CU Boulder. Indeed, "Discovery and Impact" is one of the pillars of the University of Colorado Strategic Plan, and the Regents receive annual reports on each campus's contributions in this area. Between them, CU Boulder and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus generate the lion's share (~97%) of sponsored research dollars within the University of Colorado system, with CU Boulder's share at about 47%.

The Regents also consistently reaffirm their commitment and attention to the mission of CU Boulder as a public state institution through their focus on the needs of students, current and future, and the needs of the state of Colorado as a whole. The other three pillars of the four-pillar University of Colorado Strategic Plan encapsulate this commitment: "Affordability and Student Success"; "Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Access"; and "Fiscal Strength." Annual reports on these pillars from each campus keep the Regents informed on progress and challenges in these areas.

The Regents further support and promote the mission of each of the University of Colorado campuses through Regent policies and procedures and through the robust processes associated with the development, oversight and maintenance of system policies and their relation to campus-level policies and procedures, most significantly those associated with education, teaching and research.

2.A.2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

2.A.2. CU Boulder continues to operate with ethical principles and standards of conduct expressed for all levels of administration, faculty, staff and students. These ethical principles, duties and expected conduct for the university community continue to evolve as the institution and those it serves evolve.

General policies and practices

As part of the University of Colorado system, CU Boulder complies in its policy and practices with the Colorado State Constitution, Colorado state law and the laws and policies established by the University of Colorado Board of Regents. CU Boulder has also adopted additional policies, procedures and practices regarding fair and ethical conduct.

Article 8, Part B of the Laws of the Regents requires that all members of the University of Colorado community be "responsible for understanding and upholding the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct," and requires faculty members to act on and off the campus with integrity and in accordance with the highest standards of their profession. Principles of ethical behavior are further elaborated in Regent Policy 8. The principles in each of the areas spelled out by Regent Policy 8 (responsible conduct, respect for others, conflict of interest, research and academic integrity, etc.) are implemented through University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 2027, "Code of Conduct," and through other policy statements (discussed below) describing behavioral expectations, processes for assuring that the expectations are being met and procedures for remediating failures.

At CU Boulder, general ethical principles and standards of conduct are expressed for all levels of administration, faculty, staff and students. The Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Academic Leaders (PRR), a campus-level policy and procedural document, sets out in broad terms the privileges and responsibilities, as well as the standards of professional conduct, for both the faculty and academic leaders. The PRR originated with the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) in 1982 and was eventually approved as an academic policy in 2013, with a revised version approved by Provost Russell Moore in 2022. The Colorado Creed (see 1A.1.) is a social responsibility code, started and led by students, that is for all members of the university community. The creed is seen and communicated as a "way of life reminder" to members of the CU Boulder community to "act with honor, integrity, and respect" and contribute to the greater good of the community—both the CU Boulder community and beyond.

In 2017, following a three-year effort led by the chancellor to establish a campus culture of and administrative commitment to ethical decision-making, CU Boulder adopted a comprehensive Ethics and Compliance Plan that established an administrative and advisory framework for the maintenance, improvement and communication of campus policies, procedures and actions regarding ethics and integrity. The plan is updated regularly to address the changes in campus culture and organization.

In 2018, the COO created a new Office of Integrity, Safety and Compliance that separated these functions from the Office of Infrastructure and Sustainability, thus highlighting their importance to the campus. As part of the ongoing efforts to create a proactive culture of ethics and compliance on the CU Boulder campus, the functions of integrity and compliance were moved in 2023 to the direct supervision of the COO's office to ensure the appropriate level of oversight and to allow the Office of Integrity and Compliance to support the campus in more strategic ways.

The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OEIC) provides the CU Boulder campus and community with support, safety measures, and resources to minimize disruptions to education or employment and help keep the involved parties and the campus safe. OEIC also provides trainings for the campus community in areas such as effective bystander training, ADA, discrimination and sexual misconduct, recognizing and mitigating unconscious bias, and managing difficult classroom dynamics.

The executive director of OIEC serves as the campus Title IX coordinator. OIEC publishes annual statistical reports of its investigations and how complaints were handled and resolved.

Paralleling the CU system ethics hotline, CU Boulder provides the "Don't Ignore It" website to receive reports of ethical concerns such as possible discrimination and harassment, sexual assault and stalking, and hazing, among other concerns. The "Don't Ignore It" website also provides access to additional reporting options and campus support resources, including those regarding confidential assistance, reports to law enforcement and health and wellness support.

Finances

Fiscal responsibility at the University of Colorado ultimately resides in the Board of Regents, whose Finance Committee makes recommendations to the entire board concerning financial decisions. Like the meetings of the entire board, Finance Committee meetings are open to the public, and agendas and minutes are published online. University investment and fiscal policy, processes and procedures are governed by the Colorado State Constitution, Colorado statute and the Laws of the Regents (Article 13 and Article 15, and are implemented through administrative policy statements having to do with accounting procedures, procurement and travel, internal controls, audits, donations and fundraising and fiscal roles and responsibilities.

The University of Colorado system has an independent, external firm that conducts an annual financial audit of all four University of Colorado campuses including central administration. The resulting annual report is submitted to the Colorado General Assembly via the Legislative Audit Committee. In addition, the University of Colorado Department of Internal Audit conducts internal operational and functional audits of all four campuses and central administration throughout the year. Another mechanism ensuring appropriate and ethical use of institutional resources is University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 4058, "Budget and Net Position Internal Reporting," which requires an annual report from each University of Colorado campus detailing unrestricted net assets/reserves and which is implemented at CU Boulder through the Unrestricted Net Position policy. The University of Colorado's most recent bond rating was AA+ by Fitch and Aa1 by Moody's.

At CU Boulder, fiscal integrity and reporting are centralized in the Campus Controller's Office, which includes a compliance subunit to serve as an internal control structure specifically for the CU Boulder campus, including Sponsored Program Accounting. The Controller's Office ensures fiscal integrity and accurate reporting to external funding agencies.

In accordance with Article 29 of the Colorado Constitution, and C.R.S.24-18.5-10, which establishes standards of conduct for employees and governing board members of public institutions of higher education focused on the avoidance of conflicts of interest between their personal financial interests and their performance of governmental responsibilities, CU Boulder officers must disclose outside financial interests and activities as required by Regent Policy 8.B, APS 4013, "Officer Disclosure of Interests," and APS 5012, "Conflicts of Interest and Commitment in Research and Teaching." Regent Policy 8.B also requires avoidance and appropriate disclosure of conflicts of interest by university staff and details staff responsibilities regarding outside consulting and service on external boards. APS 5012 also governs CU Boulder's Disclosure of External Professional Activities, which must be submitted annually by all faculty members, research personnel, students, volunteers and consultants who are responsible for the design, conduct or reporting of research.

Regarding fiscal transparency, CU Boulder administration makes frequent presentations on budgetary forecasts and plans to the Board of Regents; these are recorded in the regents' meeting minutes, which are publicly available. As described in 5.C.3., the Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee, comprising faculty, staff and student representatives, advises the provost on budgetary matters. The Boulder Faculty Assembly's Budget and Planning Committee has a similar advisory role. The website of the Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning features clear, complete explanations of how the CU Boulder budget works.

Stemming from recommendations from Academic Futures (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.), the challenges of the global pandemic, and the general widespread challenges being faced by higher education, Chancellor DiStefano announced in December 2020 that the university would be embarking on a process to redesign the campus budget model to better align with CU Boulder's mission as a comprehensive public research university (see 5.B.1.). Ultimately, the redesign team was tasked with creating a model that would reflect the university's mission and priorities as well as be transparent to "foster trust and responsibility around decision making."

As one important example of transparency and commitment to the university's mission, the new budget model (see 5.B.1.) clearly identifies how diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) goals could be better supported. Concrete actions include:

- Commitment of $5M ($1M annually for 5 years) from the Strategic Fund to the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative.
- Critical Needs faculty hiring program (see 1.C.2 and 1.C.3.) supported by an off-the-top Faculty Personnel Actions pool to provide consistent and stable funding.
- Guidelines for discretionary funds that include DEI metrics in support of decision-making
  - For FY 2025-26 and beyond, the provost's budget and finance office support will work with stakeholders to establish the process, criteria, and guidelines that will support allocation recommendations for the Supplemental Fund. One of the criteria will be student and faculty DEI metrics.
  - The 10% Shared Pool will be used in part to support DEI efforts within campus support units.

Academics

Like all policies at CU Boulder, policies regarding ethics and integrity in academics are grounded in regent law and policy as described above. Education, teaching and research policies are included on the campus policy website and the Academic Affairs policy website. CU Boulder's Academic Integrity Policy requires academic integrity of all faculty and students; the honor code and research misconduct policy and procedures are discussed below in 2.E. Campus procedures regarding grievances by or against a faculty member regarding unprofessional conduct in research, creative work, teaching and academic citizenship are also governed by the CU Boulder policy and procedures on "Professional Rights and Duties of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Duties of Department Chairs" (see 2.A.2.). Student academic grievances are handled first at the level of the academic unit and then at the level of the dean of the school or college, as detailed in "Student Appeals, Complaints, and Grievances: A Brief Guide." Each fall and spring semester, the registrar notifies all students about their student privacy rights as guaranteed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Personnel

The practice of ethics and integrity in personnel matters begins with searching for and hiring faculty and staff (see 5.B.1.) and continues with practices of employment for all instructional, research, staff and student employees. Faculty hiring is overseen by the Office of Faculty Affairs, which manages offer letters for faculty positions and faculty-leadership positions (chairs, associate deans, etc.) in partnership with the Department of Human Resources (HR), which manages the search process. Hiring for research faculty positions is similarly jointly managed by HR and the Research and Innovation Office (RIO). Faculty Affairs, RIO and HR work with colleges, schools, institutes and individual academic units to ensure that search procedures are followed fairly for all applicants; search committees receive individual training, including a review of the Faculty Search Process Manual. Hiring of staff and of postdoctoral fellowship holders and other nonfaculty research personnel is managed directly by HR. Hiring of faculty and university staff is governed by regent law and University of Colorado administrative policy (see APS 5002 and APS 5060 for faculty and APS 5056 for university staff). Hiring of classified staff is governed by state law and policy.

As discussed in 1.C., diversity and inclusion are CU Boulder priorities and key to the fair treatment of all faculty, staff and students. The Faculty Search Process Manual, mentioned above, includes guidelines for gathering a diverse pool of qualified applicants and avoiding implicit bias in hiring; in addition, HR has developed an online course on "Inclusive Staff Hiring." HR provides guidance on workplace accommodations and campus resources for, among others, persons with disabilities, nursing mothers and employees transitioning gender.

In recruiting university leaders, CU Boulder assembles search committees comprising faculty, student, and staff representatives, and community members when appropriate to the role. The search committee process is detailed in updates to the campus community, and the community is invited to provide input on a finalist or finalists upon completion of their campus visit. In the most recent example of transparency in an important leadership search, after current chancellor Philip DiStefano announced his retirement, the Office of the President of the University of Colorado System announced a forthcoming search for a new chancellor. President Saliman sought input from CU Boulder's shared governance and from the campus community at large about the desired qualities of a new chancellor, and a representative search committee was assembled as described above. The finalist and now incoming chancellor, Dr. Justin Schwartz, interviewed on campus in open forums and with leadership groups.

In accordance with APS 5003, "Nepotism in Employment," CU Boulder follows procedures ensuring that supervisors recuse themselves from any personnel actions involving supervision of an immediate family member. APS 5015, "Conflict of Interest in Cases of Amorous Relationships," defines University of Colorado procedures for removing a direct evaluative relationship between members of the university community involved in an amorous relationship.

CU Boulder is ethically obligated to ensure the safety of the campus community and visitors to campus. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) works with the campus community and local, state and federal agencies to ensure that all environmental health and safety hazards for the campus and the surrounding Boulder community are appropriately addressed. EHS maintains a comprehensive site for training and resources having to do with health and safety in laboratories and research, including the BioRAFT lab management and safety compliance application in which researchers interact with information specific to their own laboratories. The Division of Emergency Management coordinates and integrates activities to prepare for, mitigate against, and respond to threatened or actual natural and

human-made disasters. Through training and consultation with campus personnel and local officials in accordance with the Clery Act, the CU Boulder Police Department (CUPD) makes public its Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, notifies the campus community about crimes included in the Clery Act and maintains a log of all crimes, among other actions. CUPD offers classes on workplace violence, active harmer training and "Run. Hide. Fight." training, along with other resources for crime prevention.

2.B. The institution presents itself clearly and completely to its students and to the public.

2.B.1. The institution ensures the accuracy of any representations it makes regarding academic offerings, requirements, faculty and staff, costs to students, governance structure and accreditation relationships.

2.B.1. CU Boulder is committed to providing a transparent view of the university, including accrreditation, cost of attendance, graduation and retention rates, financial aid, placement of graduates, transfer credit policies, campus safety to students and the public. Additionally, senior leadership, faculty and staff work with the office of Strategic Relations and Communications (SRC) to create communication and marketing plans that support university initiatives and provide the CU Boulder community with useful and useable information. SRC uses data and research to understand the CU Boulder experience and to assist in the development of communications and tools used to support the CU Boulder experience. SRC also provides the campus community with training and resources to assist faculty, staff and students in how to best communicate and represent the institution in all forms of media.

Updated annually and publicly available, the CU Boulder catalog, managed and maintained by the Office of the Registrar, includes the most accurate program, curricular and course offerings, and lists all faculty members and their credentials according to college, school and program. The offices of the Registrar and Admissions, the Graduate School, CU Online and SRC work together to integrate and make consistent all communications about academic programs and degree requirements.

2.B.2. The institution ensures evidence is available to support any claims it makes regarding its contributions to the educational experience through research, community engagement, experiential learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

2.B.2. See 1.B.1. and 1.B.3. for the evidence CU Boulder provides for the the university's performance in research, community engagement, outreach and engagement, service learning and economic development.

Much of the university's student-related data is managed by the University of Colorado System's University Information Systems (UIS), the central source of student records. In partnership with UIS, the office of Data & Analytics provides details on alumni career progression, alumni earnings data by career and degree major, and the financial return of a CU Boulder degree. Student survey data about campus culture, high impact practices, student outcomes and additional topics are available from the student survey area on the Data & Analytics website. This site provides users with the ability to filter results by student characteristics. Assessment of student learning outcomes is detailed in Criterion 4.

2.C. The governing board of the institution is autonomous to make decisions in the best interest of the institution in compliance with board policies and to ensure the institution's integrity.

2.C.1. The governing board is trained and knowledgeable so that it makes informed decisions with respect to the institution's financial and academic policies and practices; the board meets its legal and fiduciary responsibilities.

2.C.1. The University of Colorado Board of Regents consists of nine members serving staggered six-year terms, one elected from each of Colorado's eight congressional districts and one from the state at large. The board is charged by the Colorado State constitution with the general supervision of all the University of Colorado campuses, and as a board it manages exclusive control and direction of all funds and appropriations to the university, unless otherwise provided by law. In accordance with Regent Policy 2.C.2(B), the Governance Committee of the Board of Regents is charged with the "duty and responsibility" of board effectiveness, including these responsibilities:

- Approve a board orientation process, ensuring that new board members have a clear understanding of the missions of the four campuses for which they are responsible and are aware of the role of regents in the governance of a university system.
- Develop and support ongoing education of all regents, including the annual retreat and other opportunities.
- Establish performance criteria/expectations for regents.
- Establish, coordinate, and review with the board chair the criteria and method for evaluating the performance of the board.
- Oversee the development and implementation of conflict of interest, financial disclosure, and other policies relating to the efficient, effective, and ethical operation of the Board of Regents.

Board of Regents members participate in biannual retreats that, aside from regular business sessions, often include updates on new and emerging trends in higher education and discussions on issues facing universities like CU Boulder. For example, the Summer 2023 retreat focused on student retention—both how it looks now within the CU campuses, and the K-12 perspective on what the university might expect in years to come. Regent committee meetings (see 2.C.2.) frequently include presentations by campus leadership and faculty on different aspects of university activities.

2.C.2. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.

2.C.3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.

2.C.2. and 2.C.3. The Board of Regents meets frequently throughout the year to give ample time and attention to issues and priorities of the CU campuses. The Board of Regents utilizes a committee structure, employing the strengths of each committee member and other members of the university community to examine the needs of the campuses and new and emerging areas of success and concern.

- The Governance Committee reviews and recommends policies and procedures to enhance the quality and efficiency of the Board of Regents.
- The Finance Committee oversees the fiscal stability and condition of the system and its facilities and operations.
- The University Affairs Committee focuses on the educational mission of the university and the overall commitment to a quality education.

- The Audit Committee assists the board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities regarding financial statements, internal control, risk, and performance.

One recent example of Board of Regents deliberations: at the October 17, 2023, meeting of the University Affairs Committee, the regents reviewed information regarding upcoming new federal regulations on Gainful Employment and Financial Value Transparency and how these will affect the campuses. The committee finalized recommendations for additional review and on how to begin reviewing individual campus programs for potential concerns under the new metrics. The regents were updated on this information at the full board meeting in November 2023.

The Board of Regents is also subject to the open meetings provision of the Colorado Sunshine Act, which states that "the formation of public policy is public business and may not be conducted in secret" (C.R.S. 24-6-401). As per Article 2 of the Laws of the Regents, "All regular, committee, and special meetings of the Board of Regents at which public business is discussed or formal action may be taken shall be open to the public in compliance with state open meetings requirements, provided that the Board of Regents and its committees may meet in executive session for purposes authorized by law."
In addition, per the Colorado Open Records Act as well as the Colorado Sunshine Act, all meeting minutes and agendas are publicly available.

The frequent meetings and overlapping committee memberships allow the members of the Board of Regents to have continued oversight, transparency and accountability with each other and each campus's leadership and community. Regent Policy 2 establishes faculty, staff and student shared governance representation at Board of Regents meetings and outlines requirements for public comment periods at all Board of Regents committee meetings.

2.C.4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.

2.C.4. The University of Colorado Board of Regents is the only governing board of state institutions of higher education in Colorado that is constitutionally created or elected by the voters. The directly elected nature of the Board of Regents gives it autonomy and independence rare among higher education institutions. The Board of Regents is not subject to executive branch or legislative branch confirmation and is thus not part of the state executive or legislative branches.

In the exercise of their authority, the regents are public officials and are subject to statutes that prohibit unauthorized uses of governmental power and prohibit an elected official from knowingly and maliciously refraining from performing a duty imposed upon them by law (C.R.S. 18-8-404). Colorado law also prohibits regents from performing any official act that gives direct economic benefit to an entity in which the regent has a direct or substantial financial interest (C.R.S. 24-18-108.5). Regents may not disclose confidential information to advance a private interest, accept substantial gifts that would influence a reasonable person in discharging a public duty, or accept loans or compensation for services that are not commensurate with normal market standards.

Regent Policy 8, "Conduct of Members of the University Community," describes the inherent need for members of the university community not to improperly benefit from their positions at the university. Regent Policy 2.A, which addresses the notion of conflict of interest as it applies to the members of the Board of Regents, notes that regents serve the "public trust and exercise their powers and duties in the interest of the public" and the university community at large. Regent Policy 2.A further documents the requirement that a regent should avoid the appearance of impropriety and cannot use their position to

benefit their family members and/or associates. The policy specifically outlines prohibited transactions (2.A.2.) as well as the need for an annual disclosure (2.A.3.) of any and all financial or personal interests that could potentially or actually create a conflict of interest.

2.C.5. The governing board delegates day-to-day management of the institution to the institution's administration and expects the institution's faculty to oversee academic matters.

2.C.5. Although the Board of Regents holds ultimate authority in the University of Colorado system, it has delegated day-to-day operations to the university's administration per Article 3 of the Laws of the Regents, which notes specifically that the university's administration is responsible for "carrying out the strategic plans and policies established or approved by the Board of Regents." Regent Policy 3, "Officers of the University and Administration," dictates that is the chancellor of the campus who "shall be the campus's chief executive officer and shall be the chief academic, fiscal and administrative officers responsible to the president for the conduct of the affairs of their respective campus in accordance with the policies of the board of regents."

While the regents, under Article 4 of the Laws of the Regents, approve the formation and discontinuance of academic units as well as the creation and discontinuance of degree programs, the design, delivery and assessment of these units and programs are the responsibility of the faculty.

Under the principles of shared governance specified in Article 5 of the Laws of the Regents, "Tenured and tenure-track faculty with appropriate participation by instructional, research, and clinical faculty have the principal responsibility for decisions concerning pedagogy, curriculum, research, scholarly or creative work, academic ethics, and recommendations on the selection and evaluation of faculty. The development of general academic policies shall be a collaborative effort between the faculty and administration" (5.A.1(B)). Regent Policy 5 further specifies that:

1. The faculty shall have the principal role in originating academic policy and standards related to the initiation and direction of all courses, curricula, and degree offerings; admissions criteria, grading and standards for continuation; regulation of student academic conduct; and determination of candidates for honors and degrees.
2. The faculty shall have the principal role in making recommendations for the selection of new faculty. Hiring decisions shall be in accordance with the authority delegated by the Board of Regents.
3. Faculty members of the primary unit shall have principal responsibility for the conduct of annual faculty performance evaluations and post-tenure reviews based on procedures developed in collaboration with the administration.

Regent Policy 4 describes the role of the dean of a school or college as "The principal academic and administrative officer . . . and the presiding officer for faculty meetings" and further specifies that "Each dean shall be responsible for matters at the school or college level including but not limited to enforcement of admission requirements; the efficiency of departments and other divisions within the school or college; budgetary planning and allocation of funds; faculty assignments and workload; recommendations on personnel actions; curriculum planning; academic advising accountability and reporting."

2.D. The institution is committed to academic freedom and freedom of expression in the pursuit of truth in teaching and learning.

2.D.1 [Freedom of expression](), as guaranteed under the First Amendment, and [academic freedom](), as defined by the Laws of the Regents, while distinctly separate concepts, are central to CU Boulder's academic mission and underlie our community values of inclusivity and critical thinking. [Article 1.E. of the Laws of the Regents]() declares that "the University of Colorado is committed to the principle of freedom of expression embodied in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article II, Section 10 of Colorado's State Constitution." [Article 5.D](). guarantees to university faculty academic freedom, and [Article 7.C](). similarly guarantees academic freedom to students.

Like other institutions of higher education, CU Boulder is engaged in both internal and public-facing discussions about the importance of academic freedom to the mission of the university as part of a functioning democracy. In early 2020, CU Boulder's Office of Academic Affairs [began a sustained conversation]() about academic freedom on campus, not just to articulate a formal definition of the concept, but to engage the university community in a substantive conversation about the responsibilities associated with the privileges of academic freedom. A series of programs began with a panel discussion that month and continued over the subsequent years, with the Academic Affairs website serving as a hub for additional information and resources related to academic freedom, as well as [scholar safety](). Programming has included sessions on issues of academic freedom directed toward newer faculty as well as events such as an April 2023 [visit by Dr. Shirin Ebadi,]() Nobel Peace Laureate and Iranian human rights lawyer. The Office of Academic Affairs has also issued guidance based in principles of academic freedom for [academic departments who wish to issue statements on public issues]().

2.E. The institution's policies and procedures call for responsible acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge by its faculty, staff and students.

2.E.1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.

2.E.1. CU Boulder seeks to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct in its research, teaching, and service to the campus community and the public. CU Boulder is committed to scientific and ethical integrity and academic excellence in all research activities with which our students, faculty and staff are associated. Oversight is provided by the [Office of Research Integrity]() as well as the [Office of Contracts and Grants,]() which work closely with the [Campus Controller's Office]() to ensure research efforts comply with laws and policies of the University of Colorado system, the state of Colorado and the federal government. The university's [policies and procedures]() for enforcing and monitoring regulatory compliance are available for the campus community on the Office of Research Administration website.

2.E.2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.

2.E.2. CU Boulder understands its ethical responsibilities as critical to the public good. Our mission is to guide, model and encourage students to embody ethical practices and citizenship in their work through engagement with experienced faculty and staff, other students, and various support offices and online resources.

Research and scholarly practice at CU Boulder encompasses thousands of scholarly, scientific and creative endeavors. The university's research community includes faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and undergraduate students working under faculty guidance. Research policies

ensure that researchers have the information they need to comply with federal and state laws and regulations governing the conduct of research. The Office of Research Integrity in the Research and Innovation Office is a centralized source for policies related to the ethical and legal conduct of research, including, for example, animal care and use, conflicts of interest, export controls, human research protocols, and the responsible conduct of research. The Office of Contracts and Grants (OCG) website includes research policies pertaining to sponsored project research, including property, travel, accounting and cost-sharing, among other areas. OCG's Roles and Responsibilities Matrix, among other resources, clarifies the ethical and legal responsibilities of principal investigators and administrative staff in the life cycle of a sponsored project. The Office of Environmental Health & Safety provides comprehensive services to minimize health and safety impacts to the university and the greater Boulder community, including such things as laboratory, biological, radiation and occupational/worker safety. The campuswide Office of Integrity & Compliance connects faculty with campus policies and broader compliance guidance.

2.E.3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.

2.E.3. The Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Program provides training in the ethical conduct of scientific research to CU researchers (including principal investigators, graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, postdoctoral associates and research assistants). The RCR Program consists of training in various forms, including in-person graduate-level courses and online. Additionally, training can be tailored to individual departments and laboratories. While some researchers are required to take specific RCR trainings, all campus personnel involved in research are strongly encouraged to take advantage of RCR training to ensure research is managed ethically and responsibly and complies with applicable laws and regulations.

Before registering for classes, new undergraduate students, including both first-year and transfer students, must complete the Online Experience, an online orientation program that includes training in academic honesty, proper citation of sources and avoiding plagiarism. Individual programs are responsible for training graduate students in the ethical use of information resources as part of their training in research and creative work. A 2014 survey of graduate students found that 31% of respondents reported not knowing where to report research misconduct if they were to encounter it. In response, the Graduate School instituted orientations for new unit directors of graduate studies to train them in campus policies and procedures, including those involving research ethics and integrity, and added a research ethics and integrity component to the training given to graduate students who serve as peer mentors. In the CU Boulder 2023 Graduate Student Experience in the Research University (gradSERU) survey, 85% of respondents answered "well," "very well" or "extremely well" in response to the prompt, "How well has your current graduate/professional training provided you with the fundamentals of the ethical standards in conducting research?"

The University Libraries offers learning opportunities for faculty, staff and students in the form of course-integrated research seminars, workshops, online learning objects, individual research consultations and virtual or in-person research services. Typically, sessions cover research process, specific research tools, research strategies, information literacy concepts, and practices for evaluating news and information. In working with students and scholars, librarians emphasize ethical responsibilities of properly crediting other authors and creators as well as an understanding of complexity of rights and ownership as related to information and knowledge.

2.E.4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

2.E.4. The Honor Code and the Student Code of Conduct both detail the fair, respectful and ethical behaviors that allow the Buff community to thrive and encourage each CU Boulder student to succeed. The office of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution (SCCR) confidentially investigates and manages reports and cases of academic dishonesty and enforces the appropriate sanctions depending on the violation. The Boulder Faculty Assembly works with SCCR to discuss trends and observations of issues of academic misconduct, recruit faculty to serve on the Honor Code Advisory Board and educate faculty on the Honor Code and Procedures.

In accordance with University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 1007, "Misconduct in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities," a committee formed of faculty across school and colleges has developed detailed guidelines and procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct, the timeline, and appropriate response(s). These guidelines were most recently updated in 2023. The Standing Committee on Research Misconduct is charged with investigating such allegations.

2. Summary.

CU Boulder seeks to adhere to the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct in its research, teaching, and service to the campus community and to the public, and it seeks to improve practices that facilitate those standards. Indeed, CU Boulder understands its ethical responsibilities as crucial to the public good. Our task is not merely to conform to the ethics and compliance policies and procedures set by the University of Colorado system, the state of Colorado and the federal government, but also to guide, model and encourage students in engaging in ethical practice and ethical citizenship. To this end, the chancellor has established that the university's strategic imperative of shaping tomorrow's leaders (see 1.A.1.) involves educating students who are committed to demonstrating honor, integrity, accountability, respect and contributions to the common good. In turn, the university's Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.) calls for the university to renew its commitment to the democratic and civic purposes of public higher education by embracing the core mission of furthering the public good. The campus has thus publicly committed itself not only to behaving ethically but also to teaching ethical practice as an integral part of civic engagement and civic responsibility. It is for this reason that one of the learning objectives of the new Common Curriculum (see 3.B.1. and 3.B.2.) emphasizes that "CU Boulder students will understand their roles and responsibilities as self-reflective, self-sustaining individuals, as members of groups in a diverse society, and as ethical, civically literate citizens committed to building a more equitable world."

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support
The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A. The rigor of the institution's academic offerings is appropriate to higher education.

3.A.1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.

3.A.1. CU Boulder ensures the currency and appropriateness of its courses, degrees, certificates and other credentials and of their learning goals through formal processes that govern new and existing courses and degree programs.

New courses and degree programs

Proposals for all new courses, certificates, minors, degrees, academic units and microcredentials, including planned curricula and student learning outcomes, originate with the faculty of a department or an interdisciplinary group and move through department, college and provost-level review processes.

Information required for proposals is submitted through a curriculum management system, administered by the Office of the Registrar, that ensures all proposals go through all needed review and approval steps and that proposals are archived for later reference. This system was first implemented for course approval/revision and was expanded in 2021 to include credential approval/revision. Input and beta testing from likely users, including faculty, associate deans, etc., ensured that the system is user friendly, explains the information required, and allows for comments by all reviewers for the purpose of iterative revision of each proposal.

- Proposals for new or revised courses are reviewed and approved by each college/school's curriculum committee. Information required for new or revised course proposals submitted through the course section of the curriculum management system includes how the course fits within the existing curriculum(a), principal topics covered, required readings, student learning outcomes, and overlap with, duplication of or impact on other courses.
- Certificates and minors comprise existing courses that have already been reviewed and approved. Information required for new or revised course proposals submitted through the curriculum section of the curriculum management system includes a program description, curriculum explaining how the certificate or minor builds upon existing courses or curriculum(a), student learning outcomes, administration and admissions information, budget, and overlap with, duplication of or impact on other courses. User documentation details the requirements and steps for submission. The curriculum and learning goals for a proposed new certificate or minor are reviewed by the curriculum committee and the dean of the relevant college/school according to college/school procedure. They are then reviewed and approved by the vice provost for undergraduate education or vice provost for graduate education, as appropriate, in consultation with their faculty advisory committee(s), before being reviewed and endorsed in turn by the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment and the provost.
- Detailed curriculum and student learning goals are a required element of proposals for new degrees, certificates and minors, whether offered in an existing or a new academic unit, and the curriculum and learning goals are examined at all levels of review. Workforce demand as a

measure of likely degree outcomes is also a component of a new degree proposal (see 1.C.1.), along with admission, administration and budgetary information. Extensive user documentation and tips are posted including program proposal guidelines, a proposal timelineand financial guidelines, which include instructions for conducting marketplace and workforce demand analysis.

- In accordance withUniversity of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 1038 and APS 1041, a proposal for a new degree (undergraduate or graduate) or academic unit is reviewed and endorsed by the relevant college/school dean(s) and curriculum committee(s) and by the vice provost for undergraduate education or vice provost for graduate education (or both) in consultation with their faculty advisory committee(s) before being reviewed and endorsed in turn by the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment, the provost and the chancellor. The new degree or academic unit undergoes review and approval by the Board of Regents as per Regent policy.

- CU Boulder has recently begun to offer microcredentials, which may be either non-credit or for-credit and which are documented through digital badges (see 1.C.1.). For-credit microcredentials originate with the faculty, whereas non-credit credentials may also be proposed by non-academic units (e.g., Student Affairs). In either case, microcredential proposals must include student learning outcomes. Proposals are reviewed by a universitywide Microcredentials Advisory Committee that includes representatives from academic colleges, Continuing Education, Student Affairs, the Office of Information Technology, the Center for Teaching and Learning, University Libraries and the Office of the Registrar.

Existing courses and degree programs

- Revisions to existing courses, certificates, minors and degree programs are reviewed through the same process as new proposals (see above), with the exception that the provost, not the Board of Regents, is the final level of approval for revised degree programs. Revisions to student learning outcomes are included in this review process. In addition, the Office of the Registrar annually reviews courses that have not been offered in the previous five years and works with the colleges/schools to determine whether they should be removed from the catalog.

- In compliance with APS 1019, existing academic programs, including existing degrees, certificates and minors, are reviewed on a seven-year cycle through the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) program review. Program review includes unit self-study, review by a team of disciplinary experts outside the University of Colorado and review by the ARPAC committee itself, which comprises tenured faculty from all schools and colleges. Units are reviewed in aggregated clusters (for example, social sciences or arts and humanities) that allow for comparison across cognate disciplines. ARPAC issues recommendations to the academic unit, the dean and the provost. After each review is completed, a four-year response process ensues in which the unit reports on progress in the first and third years, the dean in the second year, and the provost in the fourth year. Examples of degrees recently flagged for development or redirection include a 2020 ARPAC recommendation to create of a new master's program in the Department of Women and Gender Studies (approved by the Board of Regents in February 2024) and a 2022 ARPAC recommendation to review the master's degrees in the School of Education for possible consolidation (pending). One criterion of ARPAC review includes how the unit assesses its learning goals for its degrees (see 4.B.1.).

- In addition to the ARPAC review, many degree programs in professional fields are accredited externally by their disciplinary organizations. These accreditation processes typically include review of curricula and learning goals.

3.A.2 The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.

3.A.2. As described in 3.A.1., learning goals for degree programs, certificate programs and post-baccalaureate programs are established when those programs are created and reviewed for appropriateness when the program is revised.

The HLC Review team for CU Boulder's 2020 reaffirmation of accreditation rightly noted that, at that time, the university's catalog did not articulate learning goals for all degree programs. The university has made significant progress since then. Starting in the 2019-2020 academic year, CU Boulder implemented a campuswide program learning assessment process, overseen by a team in the Office of Data & Analytics in partnership with the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment. Faculty are at the center of the decision-making and priority-setting functions of a four-year learning outcomes cycle, beginning with a planning year in which faculty within academic programs identify program learning outcomes, complete a curriculum-mapping exercise, and then develop a three-year assessment plan. As of the 2023-2024 academic year, 93% of undergraduate programs had completed creation and publication of learning outcomes. Working in concert with the Graduate School and the academic units, the assessment team is now undertaking the same process for graduate degree programs. This project accords with one of the goals of the Graduate School's Strategic Plan, adopted in 2021: "Establish core metrics for graduate program assessment and develop a dashboard for open sharing of program successes and challenges."

See 4.B.1. for further discussion and examples of the learning outcome creation and assessment cycle for academic programs.

The university has also established learning goals for its undergraduate common curriculum and for the undergraduate first-year experience; see 3.B.1. and 3.B.2 for details.

3.A.3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements, or any other modality).

3.A.3. CU Boulder is approved to offer both distance and correspondence degrees and programs and delivers these degrees and programs online. All such degrees and programs and their learning outcomes are planned, supervised and reviewed through the process described in 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.

Quality standards for all modalities of instruction are maintained through our processes for curriculum development, program review, and support for teaching and learning with technology. Regardless of location or mode of delivery, all courses and degree programs go through the approval process, establishment of learning outcomes and program review detailed in 3.A.1. and 3.A.2. Individual courses and instructors are reviewed through the Faculty Course Questionnaire process administered by our Office of Data & Analytics, and guidance for how to use the FCQ as a formative assessment tool to improve teaching is provided by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Instructors with continuing appointments are also reviewed through the annual merit review and reappointment processes that apply to all CU Boulder faculty.

During the pandemic, CU Boulder designated instruction modes to clearly delineate whether an online course taught in the distance model was taught synchronously ("remote"), asynchronously ("online"), or

in a hybrid fashion ("hybrid"), perhaps as a hybrid with in-person instruction. These designations have been retained in order to signal clearly to students what they may expect from a course in terms of instruction mode.

Bracketing the special circumstances of the pandemic, CU Boulder has proceeded deliberately in online education, reflecting the faculty's and administration's desire to maintain academic quality and to wed online teaching modalities with pedagogical effectiveness. As a next step in implementing the Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.3.), in 2019 the provost convened an Online Strategy Working Group, one of whose charges was to develop an online strategy while still maintaining teaching excellence. In September 2019, the provost acted on the working group's first recommendation by creating CU Boulder Online, administered collaboratively by the Division of Continuing Education and the Office of Academic and Learning Innovation and overseen by the senior vice provost for online education. CU Boulder Online's academic programs focus on graduate and post-baccalaureate education and are extensions of our campus programs, vetted, developed and taught by the faculty.

In accordance with the plan to focus on graduate education in the online mode, under the distance model of online education, CU Boulder has developed four professional master's degrees (Organizational Leadership, Teacher Leadership, Corporate Communication, Outdoor Recreation Economy) as well as a postbaccalaureate degree in computer science and a small number of graduate certificates. The first of these degree programs launched in 2017, and the most recent in 2021. Continuing Education administers the delivery of these online degrees and certificates, all of which are overseen by the relevant academic unit.

Under the correspondence model of online education, CU Boulder has developed four MOOC-based professional master's programs delivered through the Coursera platform: Electrical Engineering, Data Science, Engineering Management, and Computer Science (see 1.C.1. and 3.B.3.). The first of these degrees launched in 2019, and the most recent in 2023.

The percentage of graduate students enrolled exclusively in online courses reflects the popularity of these new online graduate degrees and certificates offered in both the distance model and the correspondence model. In fall 2023, 1,599 of 7,814 degree-seeking graduate students (20.5%) were enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, whereas only 878 (11.2%) were enrolled in at least one, but not all, distance education courses.

Online courses offered under the distance model, whether taught synchronously, asynchronously, or in hybrid instruction mode, have proved popular for undergraduate students, but few of our undergraduates are enrolled exclusively in these courses. In fall 2023, only 934 of 31,581 degree-seeking undergraduate students (3.0%) were enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, whereas 11,450 (36.3%) were enrolled in at least one, but not all, distance education courses.

In partnership with the Academic Technology group in the Office of Information Technology, CTL has developed resources, workshops and trainings for teaching well with technology. Support for the use of online learning teaching tools and open educational resources is also provided for instructors through the Office of Information Technology, the Division of Continuing Education, the Office of Academic and Learning Innovation, and the University Libraries.

Through the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) Partnership Programs, CU Boulder also offers undergraduate degrees in select engineering programs in partnership with [Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado University](#). These degrees follow a 2+2 model where the first two years of education are provided by the other campus and the second two years by CU Boulder, with CU Boulder curricula, instructors, advising and administrative supervision; however, CU Boulder's share of the course credits totals less than 50% of each degree. The upper-division engineering coursework is taught in person by faculty who are employed by CU Boulder and who physically residing in these communities. Upper-division students are considered CU Boulder students and the degree conferred is a CU Boulder degree, with a CU Boulder diploma. Student learning outcomes for each degree program are the same as on the CU Boulder campus (see the [mechanical engineering accreditation website](#) for one example), and the curriculum adheres to all quality and accreditation standards of CEAS and CU Boulder. For purposes of disciplinary accreditation, ABET reviews each partnership degree program at the same time as the corresponding CU Boulder-located degree program. To ensure consistency in the student academic experience, each partnership is led by a partnership program director who participates in CU Boulder departmental curriculum committees and is supported by academic advisors who are members of the CEAS Student Support and Advising Services.

CU Boulder does not participate in any consortial agreements or offer any dual credit courses. CU Boulder was previously approved to offer degree programs at one additional location, CU South Denver in Lone Tree, Colorado. The Leeds School of Business [evening MBA program](#) was the sole degree offering at this location. In 2021, CU South Denver was closed upon the [sale of the property](#). [A teach-out plan](#) was put in place to allow students to complete their degrees through the Boulder campus.

3.B. The institution offers programs that engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of intellectual inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

3.B.1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements.

3.B.1. At the time of CU Boulder's 2019-2020 Assurance Review, the university had not begun work on a single general education program; individual college/school gen ed requirements substituted for a campuswide vision. The [College of Arts and Sciences (A&S)](#) general education curriculum serves as the framework for three other schools: the [Leeds School of Business](#), the [School of Education](#) and the [College of Music](#) with the exception of the bachelor of music students in music performance). The three remaining colleges/schools/programs—the College of Media, Communication and Information (CMCI), the Program in Environmental Design and the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS)—make broader use of Arts and Sciences general education outline while maintaining their own requirements. The [Program in Exploratory Studies (PES)](#), which admits new students (including [pre-business](#) and [pre-engineering](#) students) who have not yet affiliated with a school/college directs students into a general education curriculum that will match that of their likely major.

In the 2018 Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.), however, the entire CU Boulder community—faculty, staff and students—came together to express common educational purposes for the entire university. Among these were CU Boulder's commitment to the principles of a liberal arts education and the recommendation that the university "formulate and then move to implement a plan

for a campuswide common learning experience and/or curriculum." The following year, the [Interdisciplinary Working Group](#) assembled to consider some of the Academic Futures recommendations called for the creation of a range of both disciplinary and interdisciplinary educational experiences for our students. In May 2020, following the HLC Final Action that included a Monitoring Report on this issue, the chancellor instructed the university to move ahead to design "a common general education experience for all undergraduate students that is cohesive across all our colleges and schools that offer undergraduate degrees [and] fully aligns with our Academic Futures strategic initiative that recommends a campuswide common learning experience and a common set of intended learning outcomes."

After a delay due to the pandemic, the [planning process for designing a campus-wide curriculum](#) began. In the spring 2021 semester, a team comprising the vice chancellor for academic planning assessment, the former dean of the College of Music, and staff members in supporting roles invited white papers from the campus community; conducted a [listening tour](#) of colleges, schools and academic departments; and held open forums. A total of 14 white papers were received, and a total of 80 sessions (including both open forums and sessions with individual academic departments, student support offices and student groups) were held, with a total of more than 1,250 student, faculty and staff participants. Each session began with discussion of two fundamental questions. What university values should the common curriculum represent and support? What should a graduate of CU Boulder know and be able to do?

In September 2021, the provost formed a Common Curriculum Steering Committee comprising faculty representatives from all the schools and colleges with undergraduate degrees (including all three divisions of the College of Arts and Sciences), the University Libraries, and the Boulder Faculty Assembly. They were joined on the committee by staff members representing Student Affairs, Undergraduate Education, and Arts and Sciences General Education administration; one undergraduate student; and one graduate student. The provost [charged](#) the committee, which was co-chaired by the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment and the dean and vice provost for undergraduate education, with "the identification and design development of a common curriculum through which our undergraduate students will achieve shared learning goals that address integrative values and common touchpoints throughout the undergraduate career" and with "proposing campuswide learning goals that reflect both a deliberate statement about who we are as a university and that complement and enhance all of our educational programs."

The committee studied the input received from the white papers, the listening tour and outside constituents including alumni and employers; examined models from peer and other U.S. colleges and universities; and discussed how a common curriculum should further the university's mission. In spring 2022, the committee posted a draft proposal; held four forums open to faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students, and community members; and invited further feedback over the spring and summer via the [Common Curriculum website](#) or sent as direct emails. During the summer and early fall of 2022, the draft proposal was revised in response to this extensive feedback. In October, the committee submitted its [final proposal.](#) In fall 2022, the committee co-chairs presented the final proposal to the faculty in a series of meetings with all seven undergraduate colleges, schools, and programs, the University Libraries, and the Boulder Faculty Assembly. All the committee's activities were documented on the website throughout this process.

At the provost's request, the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) organized a voting process that would include separate votes from the faculty governance bodies of each school and college as well as the

campuswide BFA itself. Faculty bodies deliberated on the common curriculum by using their units' governance processes. The result was overwhelming campus endorsement, with the sole exception being the Leeds School of Business. Leeds conducted two votes, the first narrowly against, and the second in favor but lacking a quorum.

In February 2023, the provost directed the BFA, the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment and the vice provost and dean of undergraduate education to proceed toward implementing the common curriculum.

The first step has been to create the needed policy and procedures for campuswide curricular oversight, since such oversight has not existed at CU Boulder to date. To that end, the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment and the BFA have drafted a policy to create a campus curriculum committee to oversee not only the common curriculum, but also other campuswide curricular issues such as curricular duplication across academic units. After normal policy review procedures and approval, the committee will be seated in fall 2024.

The second step is to map the common curriculum to the program learning outcomes of all degree programs, the degree requirements of all undergraduate colleges and schools, and the learning goals and outcomes of the First Year Experience (see 3.B.2.). The campus curriculum committee will work with the college and school deans and curriculum committees to formulate how any gaps will be addressed. The common curriculum is expected to be put in place for the 2026 entering cohort of undergraduate students.

3.B.2. The program of general education is grounded in a philosophy or framework developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and develops skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

3.B.2. Early in its deliberations, and in keeping with the provost's charge, the Common Curriculum Planning Committee determined that a common curriculum was the correct approach for CU Boulder, rather than a core curriculum consisting of a prescribed set of courses or distribution requirements. In presentations and open forums, the committee chairs explained the difference: a common curriculum introduces and engages students in common themes, skills, methodologies and values that the university deems important for the development of its undergraduate student population. In other words, a common curriculum describes a set of foundational themes and integrative values that are addressed throughout the undergraduate educational experience, including courses, academic disciplines and co-curricular programs.

The co-chairs also presented to the faculty that a common curriculum as the committee was envisioning it does not take a "gen ed" approach of existing only in the lower-division educational experience or only in the classroom. Its learning outcomes are not intended to be satisfied through a defined set of core classes that all students are required to take. Instead, they will be fulfilled throughout the entire course of students' academic journeys, from the first-year experience through graduation, via both curricular and co-curricular activities. Students will achieve the learning objectives of the common curriculum as they participate in the first-year experience (which has and assesses its own learning goals and outcomes), complete the requirements for their majors, and satisfy the requirements for their degrees. The common curriculum will thus make a virtue of the individualism that is characteristic of CU

Boulder students, as each student decides what courses and programs addressing these various themes and ways of knowing best serve their educational needs and interests, both within and beyond their majors; a common curriculum will also accommodate our students' increasing tendency to build their academic programs across different schools and colleges.

In addition to and in accordance with the values expressed by the faculty in the early listening tour and white papers studied by the planning committee, the preparation provided by the common curriculum will assist our students in exploring connections between their academic work and their lives beyond the university, possibly where no connection has existed before. In this way, a common curriculum will support CU Boulder's embrace of a liberal arts education that prepares students, no matter their major, for a flexible approach to and capacity for broad lifelong learning.

Drawing upon the themes and values for undergraduate education heard repeatedly from staff, students, community members and especially faculty, the planning committee set its working goals as follows: (1) Identify the overall objective of the common curriculum—i.e., the purpose and distinctive nature of a CU Boulder education. (2) Identify further learning objectives that define (a) essential habits of mind that support students' learning, inquiry, and engagement and (b) essential skills that each student should develop. (3) Design learning outcomes for each learning objective.

Reflecting the values and aims expressed by the faculty, the approved common curriculum articulates the overall purpose and distinctive nature of a CU Boulder education as *preparing students to help create sustainable futures for themselves, for society, and for the world.* Under this overall rubric of "Sustainable Futures: Self, Society, World," the common curriculum encompasses a total of seven learning objectives:

- The overall learning objective
- Three habits of mind that support this overall objective: discovery, reflection and engagement
- Three essential skills for accomplishing these goals: information literacy, critical thinking and communication

Each of these seven learning objectives includes three assessable learning outcomes:

- *Overall Objective – Sustainable Futures: Self, Society, World*
  The overall learning objective of the common curriculum is to enable students to understand how individual, societal, and environmental well-being and sustainability are intertwined and mutually dependent. The three learning outcomes require students to be able to articulate how their actions can foster their individual welfare, contribute to building resilient communities and ensure environmental stewardship.

- *Learning Objectives – Habits of Mind*
  The three habits of mind ensure that students will be prepared to be lifelong learners and actively engaged citizens and leaders who understand their role in creating balanced and equitable futures for all.
  - Discovery—Fosters knowledge creation, creative work, and innovation by requiring that students be able to evaluate theories, practices, and/or methodologies, assess the relationships among multiple positions, and integrate differing ideas to create new concepts or solutions to problems.

- Reflection—Builds understanding of how individuals can use self-reflection to comprehend how they are positioned in relation to other people, assess the ethics of their actions affect themselves and others, and enhance their own learning and well-being.
- Engagement—Prepares students to advance a diverse democracy as informed citizens and leaders by requiring that they define their approaches to leadership and community engagement, participate in respect dialogue across difference, and engage with communities through learning, service, or publicly engaged research, scholarship or creative work.

- *Learning Objectives – Skills*
  The three skills ensure that students will have the tools necessary to discover, reflect and engage effectively.
  - Information literacy—Enables students to evaluate the validity of information, understand how information is produced, disseminated, and received, and recognize how information is used to challenge or reinforce social relations.
  - Critical thinking—Ensures that students can engage thoughtfully with arguments, evaluate sources of information and their sources, and create original arguments and solutions through discussion and collaboration.
  - Communication—Requires that students be able to explain and convey complex ideas clearly and logically, both verbally and in writing, and argue persuasively to different audiences.

In discussions with faculty, it emerged that most believed that their own discipline's undergraduate major requirements and their college/school's gen ed requirements fulfilled these learning objectives and outcomes. As mentioned in 3.A.1., then, a major task in implementing the common curriculum will be to map existing degree programs' learning objectives and outcomes onto those of the common curriculum. As well, the common curriculum is designed to incorporate co-curricular experiences that are common to all students. Therefore, this mapping exercise will also include the first-year experience, whose learning outcomes were developed and approved in 2021.

The mapping work will also need to determine where students from individual colleges/schools/majors may not have the opportunity to achieve the common curriculum learning outcomes. Working with the Campus Curriculum Committee (see 3.A.1.), college/school curriculum committees will need to determine how to amend any gaps, either by better articulating learning outcomes that are implicit in their curricula or by expanding their curricula. The Campus Curriculum Committee will also be charged with regularly reviewing the common curriculum and assessments of its effectiveness, and with proposing updates to meet the changing landscape of student needs and the state of human knowledge and skill formation.

3.B.3. The education offered by the institution recognizes human and cultural diversity and provides students with growth opportunities and lifelong skills to live and work in a multicultural world.

3.B.3. The common curriculum (3.B.2.) was designed to enable students to recognize human and cultural diversity to prepare them to learn, live, and work in a multicultural world. *Habit of Mind #1: Discovery* encourages students to be versed in uncovering information and discerning patterns, then

integrating multiple sources. *Habit of Mind #2: Reflection* encourages students to consider how they are positioned with society and how their actions affect others. *Habit of Mind #3: Engagement* encourages the kind of thoughtful engagements that further democratic participation and action. *Skill #1: Information Literacy* demands that students consider how knowledge is created and disseminated and teaches them how to differentiate between competing truth claims. *Skill #2: Critical Thinking* ensures that students will be able to analyze arguments and argue persuasively. *Skill #3: Communication* specifies that students must learn how to communicate across difference.

Whatever their college or school, all undergraduate students learn to engage in diverse perspectives and become global citizens. Diversity is an explicit part of the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Media, Communication and Information general education curricula, which between them apply to the vast majority of undergraduates at CU Boulder. (The College of Music, the School of Education, and the Leeds School of Business all rely on slightly modified versions of the College of Arts and Sciences gen ed curriculum.) Both A&S and CMCI require courses on diversity-related topics. The outliers are the general education curricula of Environmental Design and CEAS, which do not require such courses. Environmental Design, however, declares that its mission includes "integrating diverse perspectives into the ENVD curriculum . . . to minimize ways design education disregards underrepresented perspectives." Similarly, CEAS's 2023 strategic vision emphasizes both global research engagement and community inclusiveness in ways that directly focus on understanding human and cultural diversity as essential to the education of engineers and computer scientists. Further, CEAS is working to strengthen its educational support of a diverse population of students by, for example, consolidating the college's diversity, gender equity and multicultural support efforts into one team, the BOLD Center, and offering 2+2 programs directed toward students from nontraditional backgrounds (see 1.B.1.).

A number of individual majors, minors and certificates emphasize human and cultural diversity. For example, the programs offered by Ethnic Studies, Women and Gender Studies and International Affairs; the MA program in Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy and the PhD in Education with an emphasis in Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy; and the undergraduate Minor in Global Engineering. Educational programs such as those offered by the Mortenson Center for Global Engineering and Education Abroad instill global awareness in students. In addition, the university's MOOC-based courses and degrees on the Coursera platform extend a CU Boulder education to the globe in an affordable fashion that addresses global need.

CU Boulder is committed to expanding its international education, a theme strongly developed in the Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.), which offered recommendations regarding internationalizing the campus. Recent nationwide declines in international student enrollments, however, have also been seen at CU Boulder, where the population of international students has declined from its high of 9.5% in 2016. This decline has been felt primarily in our undergraduate student population; the population of international graduate students has rebounded since its pandemic-era decline (see 1.C.2. and 1.C.3.)

Within Academic Affairs, two units focus on the teaching and learning of cultural diversity:

- The Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE) brings together a number of college/school and campus programs into the CU LEAD Alliance (Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity), which coordinates diversity, inclusivity and student success efforts and supports students campuswide as CU LEAD Scholars. OUE also houses several freestanding diversity efforts related

to teaching and student success, such as the TRiO McNair Scholars Program. OUE is the home for [Education Abroad](#), charged with student international experiences and part of [International Student and Scholar Services.](#)

- The [Division of Student Affairs](#) brings together [a number of student support services](#) related to cultural diversity and intercultural competence.

3.B.4. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their offerings and the institution's mission.

3.B.4. [CU Boulder's vision](#) to be a leader in addressing the humanitarian, social and technological challenges of the 21st century and three strategic imperatives—to shape tomorrow's leaders, be the top university for innovation and positively impact humanity—are drawn from CU Boulder's mission as a major research institution committed to the discovery of new knowledge (see 1.A.1.). The student experience is invested with this mandate. Some specific examples serve to illustrate how undergraduate and graduate student experience is intertwined in the university's research and creative mission:

- *Undergraduate research support:* Undergraduates are directly involved in research projects through the [Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program](#) (UROP), which funds undergraduate students to work either as part of a faculty-led research team or on an individual project co-designed and supervised by a faculty member, and the [Professional and Academic Conference Endowment](#) (PACE), which funds undergraduates to present at national and international conferences. UROP award numbers peaked in FY 2018-2019, with 298 students funded; both applications and awards dropped in number during the pandemic but have since climbed somewhat, with 244 awardees in FY 2023-2024. PACE awards plummeted during pandemic travel restrictions but have since exceeded their pre-pandemic peak, with 85 grants awarded in FY 2023-2024 vs. 69 in FY 2018-2019. Publication opportunities for undergraduate research and creative work are provided by student-produced journals including the [Honors Journal](#), [Meridian](#), and [Hindsight](#). In addition, undergraduate students are included as co-authors or co-curators of groundbreaking papers, studies and exhibitions. To give just a few examples: [a study](#) that disproves a longstanding number theory conjecture; [data analysis](#) establishing that solar flares are not the cause of the sun's corona being so hot; and [cataloging and curation of a collection of historical materials](#) from Boulder Gay Liberation, an on-campus student group from the 1970s and 1980s. UROP also facilitates an innovative annual [Sidewalk Symposium](#) in which students present their research projects in chalk on sidewalks and explain them to passers-by.
- *Graduate research support*: research and creative work are at the heart of graduate training at CU Boulder, and many master's students and most doctoral students hold [graduate assistantships or traineeships](#).
- *Disciplinary knowledge:* Each department and college fosters research opportunities through which faculty and students connect to research within their field domain. To cite only two examples, the College of Engineering & Applied Science creates research and industry connections for its students through its ["Sponsor a Senior Design Project"](#) program, and the College of Media, Communication and Information supports research and entrepreneurial opportunities joining faculty and students through its [Media Economies Design Lab](#).
- *Interdisciplinary knowledge:* CU Boulder is uniquely defined by its [12 research institutes](#), which bring faculty, students and postdoctoral fellows together in interdisciplinary groups around research areas such as climate change, renewable energy, aerospace and wellness. Although these institutes do not offer curricula (except for sponsoring certificates), they shape CU

Boulder's intellectual identity, powerfully focusing faculty and graduate students across disciplines on the changing nature of knowledge. They also include research and professional opportunities for undergraduate students. For example, the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) hires and trains undergraduate students to staff its [Boulder Solar Alliance Research Experience for Undergraduates](#).

- *Artistic practice:* The creative arts programs at the university directly involve students in productions in the visual and performing arts that unite faculty and student creative work. For example, the [Colorado Shakespeare Festival](#), the only professional Shakespeare company in the United States that is hosted by a top research university, hires both undergraduate and graduate students as actors, interns, dramaturges and technical staff engaged in bringing scholarship and theatrical craft to life on the stage. Similarly, the [CU New Opera Workshop](#) has CU graduate student singers and composers working with acclaimed opera composers on new operas on the way to professional world premieres.
- *Community engagement:* Discovery at CU Boulder extends beyond discrete knowledge production to a broader sense of knowledge production within the community through the outreach programs discussed in 1.D.3., for example, [CU Engage](#), which connects faculty and students to community-based learning and research.

Student involvement in research and creative work benefits not only their educational experience, but also the public good. The Academic Futures strategic initiative emphasizes CU Boulder's mission as a research university as deeply connected to furthering our students' relationship to their world, and documents CU Boulder's dedication to public knowledge (see 1.A.2., 1.A.3. and 1.B.1.). A CU Boulder education is defined by this spirit of contemporary public inquiry. It lives in the individual undergraduate and graduate curricula, but more broadly, we recognize this spirit of inquiry in our graduates' independence, their open-mindedness and their willingness to explore.

For these reasons, four of the seven learning objectives in the common curriculum (see 3.B.2.) directly engage undergraduate students' training for and participation in research, creative work and discovery:

- *Habit of Mind #1: Discovery.* CU Boulder students will be active members of a university community that is devoted to the advancement of knowledge and marked by creation and creativity across all areas of research, scholarship, creative work, and innovation. They will cultivate curiosity and develop new ways of thinking, working, and living by participating in applied learning and invention and publicly presenting their research, scholarship, and creative work.
- *Skill #1: Information Literacy.* CU Boulder students will be able to negotiate increasingly complex information environments and to understand different modalities of information, how information is produced and valued, and their own involvement and participation in information landscapes as they create new knowledge.
- *Skill #2: Critical Thinking.* CU Boulder students will be able to conceptualize and synthesize an original belief about or solution to an issue through reasoned questioning, evaluation, and judgment derived from rigorous analysis, interpretation, inference, observation, discussion, and/or experience, and then to apply the finding in an intellectually transformative way, with an understanding of its relevance and implications.
- *The Overall Objective* reflects the university's notable strength of [innovation to support climate sustainability](#). At CU Boulder, students will gain an understanding of the interdependence of individual, societal and environmental well-being and of the necessity for stewardship to advance balanced and equitable futures for all. Throughout their CU Boulder education,

students will cultivate skills and habits of mind that enable them to thrive as individuals and contribute to a thriving world.

CU Boulder graduates indicate they are well prepared in research-related skills. In the 2021 Senior Exit surveys, a large majority of students indicated they had met the following learning goals:

- 92% agreed that their experience at CU Boulder contributed to their knowledge and skills in "Thinking critically, comprehensively and creatively about texts, artifacts and problems"
- 91% agreed that their experience at CU Boulder contributed to their knowledge and skills in "Formulating and investigating research, creative work and open-ended questions" and "Locating, evaluating and applying relevant evidence and technologies to solve problems in their disciplinary areas of study"
- 90% agreed that their experience at CU Boulder contributed to their knowledge and skills in "Sustaining complex arguments with appropriate evidence"
- 89% agreed that their experience at CU Boulder contributed to their knowledge and skills in "Solving problems even with ambiguous, contradictory and controversial information"

In the 2023 gradSERU Survey, most graduate students who had research assistant experience at CU Boulder described themselves as "competent," "very competent" or "extremely competent" in research areas such as "identifying standards in your discipline for sharing research" (76%), "identifying a novel research question" (78%), "critically evaluating existing scientific literature and data" (87%) and "following best practices of integrity and reproducibility in scientific research" (89%). In terms of their level of satisfaction with research-related activities in their discipline, however, graduate students were less positive: 69% rated themselves as "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their experience in "conducting my research independently," but only 27% were satisfied with their experience in "assisting faculty with writing research grants or proposals."

3.C. The institution has the faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3.C.1. The institution strives to ensure that the overall composition of its faculty and staff reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

3.C.1. Through concerted planning, training and awareness efforts, CU Boulder has made strides in diversifying its faculty in recent years and has made some advancements in diversifying its staff (see 1.C.2. and 1.C.3.). It is important to stress that the university includes many factors in considering what would help make the faculty and staff diverse. For faculty, for example, the new Critical Needs Hiring Program (see 1.C.2. and 1.C.3.) commits 32 centrally funded faculty hires over three years, with potential faculty being considered on the basis of having "perspectives, life experiences, and expertise that are not (or are less) represented within the unit doing the hiring" and expressly not on the basis of their "beliefs or identities."

Another element in this effort is the successful retention of faculty and staff. The Office of Faculty Affairs supports a number of networking and community-building groups for faculty (e.g., Faculty of Color and Friends, and Women+ Faculty), and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has begun a support program for Employee Affinity Groupsfor both faculty and staff. CU Boulder recently joined a national initiative aimed at attracting, retaining and supporting STEM faculty while addressing historical barriers

to their success: [Aspire: The National Alliance for Inclusive and Diverse STEM Faculty](#), which is sponsored by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU). The overarching strategy of Aspire is to effect change by aligning and reinforcing professional development and hiring practices of STEM faculty at institutional, regional, and national levels. Institutions conduct self-assessment exercises and develop action plans within a cohort of institutions.

3.C.2. The institution has sufficient numbers and continuity of faculty members to carry out both the classroom and the non-classroom roles of faculty, including oversight of the curriculum and expectations for student performance, assessment of student learning, and establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff.

3.C.2. [As of fall 2023, CU Boulder had 2,571 instructional faculty](#), a 19% increase since 2014. This increase closely matches the 20% growth in the student body during the same period, demonstrating CU Boulder's commitment to maintaining the ratio of faculty who take on instructional and curricular supervision. Between [2013](#) and [2022](#), the student-faculty ratio remained the same, 18:1.

Between 2014 and 2023, tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty increased from 1,129 to 1,235 (9%); full-time teaching-track faculty (also known as instructor-track faculty), who have renewable, generally multi-year contracts, increased from 341 to 570 (67%); and lecturers, who hold part-time contingent positions, increased from 665 to 776 (17%). It is noteworthy that CU Boulder saw a small shift away from TTT faculty toward teaching-track faculty during this period but did not see a similar shift toward lecturers (contingent faculty). TTT faculty made up 52% of the total in 2014 and 48% in 2023; teaching-track faculty, 16% of the total in 2010 and 22% in 2023; and lecturers, 31% of the total in 2014 and 30% in 2018. It is also noteworthy that both the number and percentage of TTT faculty peaked in 2020 (1,306 faculty members; making up 52% of the total), declining in the three years since. Research faculty, who are not in TTT positions but assist in student research supervision (see 3.B.5.), increased between 2013 and 2023 from 1,951 to 2,080 (7% increase).

CU Boulder is focused on the retention of high-performing faculty, and salary competitiveness is one way to help achieve this goal. The Office of Data & Analytics provides faculty salary data to colleges/schools and to Academic Affairs to help identify equity problems and to aid in appropriate salary-setting for new hires and promotions. While salaries for assistant professors are, on average, higher than those in the comparison group of AAU public universities and salaries for associate professors are on par, [salaries for full professors](#) are significantly lower than the comparison group. In 2022, the provost took concrete steps to lessen this disparity by [increasing the promotion raises](#) at the time of tenure and promotion for TTT faculty. A similar measure was put into place in 2024 for [teaching faculty](#).

As discussed in 2.C.5., faculty oversight over the curriculum is established by Board of Regents law and policy. Faculty also have oversight over the peer evaluation intrinsic to faculty hiring, constituting the search committees for tenured, tenure-track and full-time teaching-track and clinical-track positions. Lecturer hiring is the purview of faculty serving as chairs, associate chairs or directors of programs; lecturers hired to teach courses in Continuing Education are subject to approval by the relevant department. Faculty and their academic departments/programs are the locus of assessment of student learning (see 4.B.).

3.C.3. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.

3.C.3. In accordance with [University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 5060](#), tenured and tenure-track faculty, teaching-track faculty and clinical-track faculty have the terminal degree in the field or equivalent qualifications and have met the requirements for the position as defined by their department and college/school; lecturers have an advanced degree or advanced experience in an appropriate discipline. Exceptions for "equivalent qualifications" or "advanced experience" are made only when a faculty member's career expertise suits them for teaching craft-driven or professional courses such as in musical performance or business practice. Faculty numbers as of November 2023 included only six TTT faculty and 16 teaching-track faculty whose highest degree was a bachelor's degree. For membership in the graduate faculty, a faculty member must hold a doctoral degree or the terminal degree appropriate to the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship or creative achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

In collaboration with the schools and colleges, the Office of Faculty Affairs oversees the process to confirm that [TTT](#)and full-time [instructor-track and clinical-track faculty](#) have the credentials requisite to their positions before they are hired. The department and school/college oversee faculty credentials for hiring part-time instructor-track and clinical-track faculty and lecturers. [Appointments and reappointments to the graduate faculty](#) are for a specified term and are reviewed by the Graduate School.

In programs with specialized accreditation (see 4.A.5.), additional review of faculty qualifications takes place. For example, in the College of Engineering and Applied Science, each program ensures that faculty meet the requirements outlined by ABET. This information is reported in self-studies as part of ABET's evaluation cycle every six years.

3.C.4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.

3.C.4. [Regent Policy 11.B.](#) requires that "the faculty of the primary unit shall develop, in consultation with the chair, dean, and the provost, a process for annual merit evaluation" of faculty. [TTT and instructor-track and clinical-track faculty are reviewed annually](#) on their contributions to the teaching, research/creative work, and service missions of the primary unit and the university. Effort in each of these areas is weighted according to the workload assignment for the individual faculty member. Lecturers (contingent, temporary faculty) are evaluated for their teaching by the hiring department.

Tenure-track faculty undergo rigorous comprehensive (pre-tenure) review and promotion and tenure review on a calendar established at the time of hiring; these reviews are conducted according to procedures established by [Regent Policy 5](#) and University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement [(APS) 1022](#), "Standards, Processes and Procedures for Reappointment, Tenure, Promotion, and Post-Tenure Review", which requires that each primary unit have a document that describes the criteria and procedures for reappointment, tenure and promotion in that unit. In the calendar year 2023, [64 faculty earned tenure](#). Tenured faculty are reviewed every five years in a post-tenure review process also established by APS 1022 and administered by the colleges/schools according to [CU Boulder guidelines](#).

Teaching-track and clinical-track faculty are reviewed for reappointment in the last year of their contract according to criteria established in that contract. Procedures for review are established by each college/school in conformance with CU Boulder Academic Affairs policy and following common procedural features established by CU Boulder. Teaching-track and clinical-track faculty are also eligible for promotion review in conformance with CU Boulder Academic Affairs policy.

3.C.5. The institution has processes and resources for assuring that instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; it supports their professional development.

3.C.5. CU Boulder has in place numerous policies, reviews and resources that help ensure that faculty stay current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. CU Boulder policy and procedures on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Academic Leaders require faculty to keep abreast of developments in the subject matter being taught, cooperate in university-mandated student evaluations of teaching and participate in peer evaluation of teaching in accordance with academic unit policy. The Faculty Information System tracks faculty productivity through faculty annually reporting their research, teaching, and service activities through the annual required Faculty Report of Professional Activities, as well as through data drawn from scholarly databases, the ORCID publication tracking system, and the Altmetric database of media and social media mentions.

According to University of Colorado APS 5008, assessments of faculty members' professional competence depend upon peer review. Faculty ability and currency in these regards is assessed, first of all, at the time of hiring (3.C.2. and 3.C.3.). Annual performance review, as well as the comprehensive review, reappointment, tenure, promotion and post-tenure review processes (3.C.3.), assess faculty on the quality of their research, scholarship, creative work and teaching, and include extensive written feedback from all relevant levels of review. Annual merit review includes feedback from a faculty review committee and/or the chair of the primary unit. Teaching-track and clinical-track faculty reappointment (see 3.C.3.) includes feedback from the primary unit review committee, the entire primary unit (usually represented by the chair/director), and the dean. Review processes specific to TTT faculty (comprehensive review, tenure, promotion) also include feedback from a dean-level committee, a provost-level committee and the provost. According to University of Colorado APS 1009, multiple measures of teaching, including but not limited to student course evaluations, are included as part of all these assessments as relevant to a faculty member's assigned workload.

Tenured faculty maintain a professional plan that is reviewed during post-tenure review (3.C.4.). Tenured faculty members who receive an annual merit evaluation of "below expectations" must develop a Performance Improvement Agreement, and faculty members who receive two such evaluations in a five-year period or fail to meet the goals of a Performance Improvement Agreement undergo Extensive Review and are required to create a Development Agreement. Failure to fulfill the Development Agreement and achieve professional competence prompts sanctions, including the possibility of revocation of tenure and dismissal.

Regent Policy 5 requires that primary units provide untenured tenure-track faculty with mentoring opportunities and encourages that such opportunities be extended to tenured faculty and other faculty. Units report on their faculty mentoring systems as part of the regular program review process (see 4.A.1.). A number of mentoring and professional development resources are offered centrally by the Office of Faculty Affairs.

CU Boulder established its Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in 2020, unifying personnel and services that had previously been offered in different offices and building a vastly expanded array of programming and individual mentoring. CTL offers consultations, classroom observations, workshops, toolkits, communities of practice and microcredentials to help faculty (including graduate students with teaching positions) hone their pedagogical skills and knowledge in areas such as inclusive pedagogy, principles of college teaching, supporting international students, classroom management, teaching with technology and teaching in the age of AI. Now the "front door" for any faculty member at CU Boulder who seeks professional development in teaching and learning, CTL has an impressive record of serving increasing numbers of the university community and of being a locus for pedagogical innovation. For example, CTL's Innovating Large Courses Initiative creates department-based course teams that collaboratively identify and address the particular issues associated with student success in their respective course(s), working together for three years to identify, plan and adopt course design practices and implement effective teaching strategies that support student learning.

Other development opportunities specific to faculty include the Faculty Leadership Institute for emerging leaders and the Academic Leadership Institute series for faculty planning to enter leadership roles. Services offered by the Office of Faculty Relations help faculty and academic administrators develop and maintain positive and productive working relationships and include individual consultation, mediation, assessment of unit dynamics and investigations of allegations of unprofessional behavior. The Ombuds Office houses several ombudspersons who are professors emeriti and who assist faculty.

Each semester and once in the summer, the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment issues Academic Instruction Guidance that reminds faculty and graduate students with teaching appointments of policies, deadlines, best practices, and resources for offering their courses and for effective teaching and learning. This guidance was first issued in 2020 to guide faculty and department chairs in teaching during the pandemic and has evolved to address emerging issues and new resources.

3.C.6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.

3.C.6. CU Boulder policy and procedures on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Roles and Professional Responsibilities of Academic Leaders require faculty to keep posted office hours. Individual colleges and schools require all faculty/instructors to list those hours in their syllabi and post them on department/program websites. These requirements equally apply to CU Boulder's courses on the Coursera program, for which course facilitators (TAs) hold online office hours. All instructors (except some of those teaching in online-only programs) are provided with office space to meet with students.

New and expanded technological tools have expanded the ways that students can communicate and meet with their instructors. Online teaching during the pandemic made faculty and students alike comfortable with meeting virtually in office hours, improving student access. Canvas, CU Boulder's learning management system, provides both traditional and online students additional access to their instructors. As of spring 2024, Canvas was employed in 90% of CU Boulder courses and 96% of undergraduate courses. A faculty group organized by CTL has recently published a guide for "promising practices" for grading in Canvas that will help faculty maintain their Canvas gradebooks as another mode of communicating with students about their academic performance.

3.C.7. Staff members providing student support services, such as tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and cocurricular activities, are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.

3.C.7. Position descriptions for staff members providing student support services, including duties, expectations and qualifications for the position, are advertised online and are screened for minimum qualifications by Human Resources (HR) to determine the appropriate level of experience and education needed for the role. Staff in student support areas are required to have the education, experience and, if applicable, professional licensure appropriate to their positions, typically at least a bachelor's degree but often a graduate-level degree. In addition, many staff members in Health and Wellness Services programs, including Medical Services and Counseling and Psychiatric Services, are required to be licensed. The Division of Student Affairs provides extensive resources and funding for staff professional development.

Students who work for or with student support areas—such as HealthBuffs peer coaches, Career Services student staff or student employees of Campus Recreation—may be required to have experience or certifications as a condition of employment. Training and development opportunities are overseen by the relevant supervisor, a professional staff member. Resident Advisors in residence halls must meet minimum academic qualifications, go through an interview process to be selected and attend required trainings. Undergraduate and graduate students who work as tutors or learning assistants are supervised and trained through the program for which they work. Examples include the Mathematics Academic Resource Center, the Writing Center, the Learning Assistant Program and the Anderson Language and Technology Center.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and resources for effective teaching.

3.D.1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.

3.D.1. Student support services are provided primarily by the Division of Student Affairs and Health and Wellness Services. Incoming students are supported in their transition to campus through New Student and Family Programs. All students have access to career counseling, help with off-campus housing and low-cost legal assistance. All students are provided with a range of health and wellness services that include medical services, counseling and psychiatric services, a free online mental health counseling program (Academic LiveCare),an office of victim assistance and a recovery center. Students in online programs, including Coursera MOOC-based programs, also have access to virtual health services through Academic Live Care.

Other services focus on particular student groups—for example, the Office of Disability Services and Veteran and Military Affairs. The Center for Inclusion and Social Change provides support services for first-generation students, intercultural engagement, and LGBTQ+ students. Student Support and Case Management (SSCM) helps students manage academic and personal problems, and faculty and staff can refer students to SSCM if they see signs of student distress. The Basic Needs Center (see 1.C.1. and 1.C.2.) assists students with food and housing needs and connects them to other resources. Prospective and current international students receive services from International Student and Scholars Services. In addition to the student support services outlined above, students enrolled in online courses and

programs through Continuing Education have access to specialized distance-based support services in career exploration along with academic advising. Students enrolled in online courses and programs hosted on the Coursera platform have access to curated campus career services including virtual career fairs, AI resume tools, and an online recruiting and networking platform. Graduate advisors in each Coursera-based degree program provide distance-based academic support to prospective and current students.

The Division of Student Affairs provides undergraduate students with information on these various programs starting with the mandatory CU online orientation, the Online Experience, and continuing with ongoing email campaigns and print brochures for incoming students and their families. New Student Welcome Days and other in-person and virtual events offer new students the opportunity to visit campus or connect virtually before the fall semester. Fall Welcome introduces support programs to students when they arrive on campus; international, transfer and commuter students have orientation events tailored to their needs during Fall Welcome. Editions of CU Boulder Today provide information on support programs for undergraduate students over the first six weeks of the academic year.

New Student and Family Programs, in coordination with the Graduate School, sends incoming graduate students a series of newsletters throughout the spring and summer before the start of their first term containing information on housing, transportation, registering for classes, community groups, etc. A half-day orientation a week before the start of classes includes a resource fair with representatives from support service offices and student groups. The graduate student edition of CU Boulder Todayregularly highlights these programs, and the Graduate School web site lists resources.

To staunch the flood of messaging about support services that reaches undergraduate students (and thus to increase the chances that they will pay attention to that messaging), CU Boulder now educates students about what messages they will automatically receive vs. types of messaging that they can proactively select and manage. In addition, Buff Portal, the university's one-start shop for student administrative services, pulls in personalized data from various sources across campus to provide each student with up-to-date information on what directly applies to them.

Results from the 2021 Senior Survey show that seniors were aware of most of the student support services the university provides, and the majority rated their satisfaction with the services as medium or high. In the 2023 gradSERU survey, more than 80% of graduate student respondents rated CU Boulder's services favorably.

3.D.2. The institution provides for learning support and preparatory instruction to address the academic needs of its students. It has a process for directing entering students to courses and programs for which the students are adequately prepared.

3.D.2. CU Boulder offers a number of bridge programs for entering students who would benefit from academic preparation before their first semester. These bridge programs are also designed to introduce students to campus resources and to help them build a sense of community and belonging.

- College of Arts and Science: Program for Excellence in Academics and Community
- College of Engineering and Applied Science Summer Bridge Program for Community College Students
- College of Media, Communication and Information Pathways to Excellence Summer Intensives

- Leeds School of Business Excel Scholars
- Office of Precollege Outreach and Engagement Summer Bridge Scholars
- TRIO Summer Ready Program
- Veteran's Bridge Program

Placement assessments in math, chemistry, writing and languages direct incoming students to appropriate courses, and transfer credit evaluation (see 4.A.2. and 4.A.3.) assesses equivalency of prior learning so that students can enroll in appropriate course levels. After new undergraduate students complete their online orientation sessions, they are assigned an academic advisor to assist them in finding the right courses. Graduate student advisor assignment is handled by the individual department or program.

First-year students interested in exploring academic options available at CU Boulder, along with incoming Alternative College Option (ACO) first-year students who were not admitted directly to one of the limited-enrollment programs (e.g., engineering, business or environmental design), are admitted to the Program in Exploratory Studies (PES), which is home to ~25% of new first-year students. PES provides extensive coaching and academic advising and several credit-bearing classes to assist exploratory students in finding the right major. ACO students have historically lagged the campus average in retention and graduation rates, but the 2022 first-year ACO cohort saw not only an all-time high second-fall retention rate but also an all-time narrow gap in second-fall retention rate between ACO students and all first-year students (87.2% vs. 89.1%, respectively).

The Division of Continuing Education provides advising support to nondegree students who have enrolled in CU Boulder courses through the ACCESS program, either for personal/professional development or to explore applying for admission to degree programs.

The CU LEAD Alliance(see 3.B.3.), affiliated through the Office of Undergraduate Education, is a group of learning communities spanning the schools and colleges, the Program in Exploratory Studies, the Division of Student Affairs, and the Office of Undergraduate Education that provides scholarship opportunities, academic workshops, career exploration, tutoring services, peer mentoring, research opportunities and other programs. Tutoring services are also found across various academic programs. The Academic Success and Achievement Program (ASAP) provides free tutoring for all first-year students and all other students living on campus. ASAP not only provides course-based tutoring but also focuses on supporting students in adjusting to college life, provides study tips, and shares exam preparation strategies through trained peer student support, offered through both individual and group sessions and both in-person and virtual tutoring options. The Writing Center and the Online Composition Hub serve all undergraduate and graduate students, and the Anderson Language and Technology Center (ALTEC) supports the language learning community. Many academic departments provide free tutoring or help rooms for students in specific disciplines. Academic support for international students, including free tutoring in English as a second language and U.S. academic culture, is provided by the International Student Academic Success Program, which also provides resources for faculty who teach international students.

The Graduate School provides academic support to graduate students through its peer mentoring program, graduate writing program and professional development workshops, among other services.

Buff Portal (see 3.D.1.) supports teaching and learning with a tutoring and learning resources feature that directs students to the appropriate resources based on schedule, program, first-year status,

housing status, veteran status and other data attributes. The portal provides a searchable and browsable directory of campus resources, easy access to advising help, and a comprehensive set of features that allow students to see their data and obtain assistance in areas ranging from registration to billing to grades to financial aid and many other administrative areas of the university. Finally, Buff Portal provides specialized views, guides, and experiences for specific populations such as admitted students, newly matriculated students, graduate students, and online Coursera students. Within Buff Portal, students will see a card that filters tutoring options based on college and course enrollment to help them connect with exactly the academic support they need.

3.D.3. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.

3.D.3. Advising programs and services for undergraduate students are primarily housed in colleges and schools; exceptions include the University Exploration & Advising Center, which serves students in the Program in Exploratory Studies who have not yet affiliated with a college/school, and advising services in Continuing Education. Students in colleges and schools are typically assigned to an advisor based on major, and advisors work closely with academic departments to remain abreast of curricular changes. The Office of the Registrar works closely with academic units on annual updates to curricular requirements that are mapped to degree audits and the catalog, two primary resources used by students and advisors that create transparency in what is expected for degree progress.

The 2018 Academic Futures report (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.) identified unintended inefficiencies, inequities and barriers for students that result from CU Boulder's decentralized undergraduate advising model and recommended that additional coordination is needed. In response, the university has undertaken efforts to increase coordination of the advising model under the leadership of the Office of Undergraduate Education (OUE). As of fall 2023, OUE has arranged with each college, school and program a dotted-line reporting relationship between the directors and assistant deans of advising programs and OUE. In addition, the associate vice provost in OUE meets monthly with the CU Boulder Advising Leadership Council, composed of the heads of each advising program (see C.3.7.). Together they have adopted a common framework for undergraduate advising and have created an advisory board of frontline staff from each advising program. OUE has also launched a campus advising website that houses internal resources for all advising staff.

In partnership with the Office of Data & Analytics and the Office of Information Technology, OUE has begun campus-level reporting on advising metrics. These data are currently informing further assessment of undergraduate advising structures and OUE recommendations to the provost and the deans about further coordinated, campuswide changes to undergraduate advising.

Support for timely intervention by undergraduate academic advisors is provided by the Course Alert system, initiated in 2019 and expanded in 2021 to include all undergraduate courses. Faculty are prompted to register an alert for students who appear to be struggling academically in their undergraduate classes—not completing assignments, missing too many classes, performing poorly on tests and assignments. Faculty can complete course alerts as soon as they see signs that a student needs help and well before the drop deadline. Students are notified via email that an instructor has indicated they could benefit from additional help. At the same time, advisors and other student success staff are notified so they can reach out to these students to offer resources and suggestions for improving their performance.

Academic advising for graduate students is provided by the individual degree programs and is usually conducted by a unit's director of graduate studies, a designated graduate advising committee, and/or the student's thesis/dissertation director. The Graduate School provides resources on effective mentorship to both faculty and graduate students and recommends that academic units work with faculty mentors and student mentees on regularly updated advising agreements. Graduate advising is assessed through the campus program review process (see 3.A.1. and 4.A.1.)

3.D.4. The institution provides to students and instructors the infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning (technological infrastructure, scientific laboratories, libraries, performance spaces, clinical practice sites and museum collections, as appropriate to the institution's offerings).

3.D.4. The campus infrastructure and resources necessary to support effective teaching and learning include a Center for Teaching and Learning (see 3.C.5.) along with research facilities, libraries, collections and performance/studio spaces devoted to graduate and undergraduate education.

Campuswide support for effective teaching was historically centered in the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program (FTEP) and the Graduate Teacher Program (GTP), along with, for the relevant disciplines, the Center for STEM Learning (CSL) and the Arts and Sciences Support of Education Through Technology (ASSETT) program. A review of these four programs by the ARPAC (program review) committee (see 3.A.1. and 4.A.1.)—following on and reinforced by the recommendations of a provost-level Teaching and Learning-Center Committee as well as of the Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.)—resulted in the former FTEP and GTEP being united under the banner of the new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), which opened in 2020 and which incorporated ASSETT in 2022. CTL organizes teaching development opportunities for all instructional faculty and graduate students on campus and builds alliances among other groups on campus that support teaching innovation and improvement, including the Discipline Based Education Research seminar series and the Learning Assistant Program, among others.

The six branches of the University Libraries house the largest collections in the Rocky Mountain region, providing study spaces for students and a range of services that support the teaching mission of the university. The University Libraries offer all students in all instructional modalities access to the discovery service and the library catalog. This includes access to over 4 million digital monographs, over 35,000 digital serials and periodicals and over 1,500 digital databases. All students also have access to the Interlibrary Loan infrastructure for access to materials not currently owned or leased by the University Libraries. All students in all instructional modalities may schedule individualized research consultation sessions with liaison librarians via campus video conferencing and telecommunications infrastructure. Additionally, the University Libraries provide an "Ask a Librarian" service to students, available via phone/text/instant messaging and email.

The Office of Institutional Technology provides instructors and students support for teaching and learning applications, learning spaces technology, and Canvas, our learning management system and its plug-ins; OIT is also the locus for research computing support. The university's many laboratories (e.g., the Integrated Teaching & Learning Program in the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the Teaching Trades Lab in the Physics Department), museum collections (the Museum of Natural History and the CU Art Museum), and performance and studio spaces (e.g., those used by the College of Music , the Department of Theatre & Dance, the Department of Art & Art History, and the Program in

Environmental Design) support the campus's curricular offerings. Teaching and learning infrastructure related to the needs of students with disabilities is provided by the [Office of Disability Services](). The need for a central accommodated testing center, which became increasingly apparent across a number of reviews of academic and student support programs, was fulfilled by the opening of the new [Student Testing Center]() in AY 2020–21.

The physical and research-collection infrastructure for teaching and learning is reviewed through ARPAC in the same process used for degree programs (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.), with recommendations for improvement then made to administration. Units reviewed include those that support teaching and learning even if they do not offer degree programs of their own, such as research institutes. The ARPAC process ensures that teaching and learning infrastructure—including the University Libraries; the Museum of Natural History; the CU Art Museum; the Sommers-Bausch Observatory; performance and studio spaces in the College of Music and the Departments of Art and Art History and Theatre and Dance; lab spaces for the degree programs and research institutes; instructional supports such as the Anderson Language & Technology Center; and clinical programs in Colorado Law, School of Education, and departments of Psychology (for clinical psychology) and Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences—is reviewed and assessed for how it is meeting the needs of both undergraduate and graduate teaching and learning.

Examples of specific infrastructural improvements recently made as a result of ARPAC recommendations to the deans and provost include support for the [Museum of Natural History]()'s gaining accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, increased coordination of [research computing,]() and improvements to the [Speech Language & Hearing Sciences clinical facility](). Programs that participate in specialized accreditation also undergo review of teaching and learning infrastructure according to the processes of the accrediting organization. Campus information technology related to teaching and learning is centered in the [Office of Information Technology,]() which is reviewed and improved through the strategic planning process described in 5.C.1.

3. Summary.

As one of only 38 U.S. public universities in the Association of American Universities (AAU), CU Boulder is dedicated to realizing the positive impacts of new knowledge. CU Boulder's core mission is to educate students and engage in cutting-edge scholarship and creative work, research and discovery. The success with which we carry out this mission determines our ability to accomplish our strategic imperatives to shape tomorrow's leaders, be the top university for innovation and positively impact humanity. We take pride in helping our students, faculty, staff and partners turn new ideas into productive outcomes that change lives. We also take pride in educating undergraduate students to understand the breadth and diversity of human achievement and human character. Both undergraduate and graduate students gain the knowledge and skills to contribute to their fields of academic and creative endeavor.

The [Academic Futures strategic initiative]()(see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.) affirmed CU Boulder's commitment to the values of inclusive excellence, a student-centered campus and teaching excellence. Specific projects that have been or are being implemented because of Academic Futures, including the newly standardized articulation of learning outcomes across academic programs, the new common curriculum and the new Center for Teaching and Learning, demonstrate that this commitment generates concrete action.

To accomplish these educational goals, CU Boulder hires, evaluates and supports a growing staff of qualified faculty and student-services professionals. The university is committed to a program review process that addresses not only academic units but also co-curricular and infrastructural supports to student education. These rigorous and thorough processes lead to concerted and continuous improvement.

Criterion 4. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement.

4.A. The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

4.A.1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.

4.A.1. CU Boulder conducts a thorough evaluation of its academic offerings, including degrees, minors, certificates, and courses, through the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC), which is accountable to the provost (see 3.A.1.). This process ensures that the academic credentials meet the university's standards and address student needs. In July 2023, the provost spearheaded an effort to streamline this review process to boost efficiency and enhance goal setting. This initiative introduced modifications like shorter timelines, simplified submission procedures and better feedback mechanisms, while preserving essential aspects such as data provision (see 5.A.2.) and external evaluations.

4.A.2. The institution evaluates all the credit that it transcripts, including what it awards for experiential learning or other forms of prior learning, or relies on the evaluation of responsible third parties.

CU Boulder conducts a comprehensive evaluation of all the credits it transcripts. The policy and process for transfer credit evaluation is detailed in the [university catalog](#) and the [transfer student admissions information page](#).The evaluation of transfer credit unfolds in two stages:

Initial Assessment
The Office of Admissions performs an initial evaluation of transfer credit after applicants have been admitted. Transferability is based on the practices of the leading university, as reported to the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), in the state where the institution is located. CU Boulder will make the decision on transferability based on the above criteria for institutions within the state of Colorado.

Final Determination

Subsequently, individual colleges or schools within the university, adhering to their specific policies, decide on the applicability of these transferable credits towards the graduation requirements of a particular college, school, or major (see 4.A.3.). Considerations are made for:

- The minimum number of semester credit hours that must be completed at the Boulder campus for a degree.
- The requisite number of semester credit hours to be completed in residence on the Boulder campus by a degree-seeking student for an undergraduate degree.
- The ceiling on the number of semester credit hours obtained through correspondence or similar means that can be counted towards degree or major requirements.

- The relevance and temporal validity (not exceeding 10 years) of credit hours applicable to degree or major requirements.

Each college and school has an established process for analyzing transfer courses and determining eligibility. For example, in the College of Engineering and Applied Science, students submit a [Transfer Credit Review form](#) after first checking the Transferology database to see what courses have already been evaluated. In the College of Arts and Sciences, which performs the bulk of transfer course analysis among the colleges and schools, a staff team works with faculty to review transfer course eligibility.

In accordance with University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement [(APS) 8005](#), "Adopting Standards for the Intercampus Transfer of Credits Among Campuses," coursework completed at other campuses in the University of Colorado system is a part of the student's cumulative university record and, unlike other transfer credit, is included in calculations of the overall University of Colorado grade point average (GPA). However, the applicability of this coursework towards specific CU Boulder degree requirements is determined solely by CU Boulder colleges and schools. External transfer credit presented by students to other University of Colorado campuses is evaluated by CU Boulder guidelines upon the student's matriculation into a degree program at CU Boulder.

CU Boulder offers [credit by examination](#) for AP, IB, CLEP and DSST scores. A draft policy on awards for credit for prior learning (including course challenge and faculty evaluation of non-university courses) was endorsed by the Boulder Faculty Assembly and is currently under administrative review.

4.A.3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.

The university employs the [criteria recommended by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)](#) to decide on the transferability of credits. This includes assessing the educational quality of the sending institution, the comparability and applicability of the credit to CU Boulder's programs, and the documentation provided by students. Although transfer credits may be accepted, they might not necessarily apply to the degree requirements of a specific college, school or major (see 4.A.2.). Decisions on the applicability of transfer credits toward degree requirements are made through consultation with faculty in the relevant discipline or area. Students may appeal these decisions as outlined in [CU Boulder's policy on transfer credit](#).

The transfer credit policy specifies that coursework of comparable content and scope to the CU Boulder curriculum will generally be transferred if it was completed at colleges or universities accredited by the Higher Learning Commission or other national accrediting associations at the time the work was completed. For international colleges or universities, the international equivalent of regional accreditation or Ministry of Education recognition will be considered.

If coursework was completed at a school not accredited, the student may specifically request that their coursework be considered for transfer. CU Boulder will use the recommendations of AACRAO when making its decision. These recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Educational quality of the sending institution.
- Comparability of credit to be transferred to CU Boulder.
- Applicability of the credit in relation to the programs being offered at CU Boulder.
- Additional documentation that students may be required to provide regarding the coursework for transferability.

In addition, the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) has established the Guaranteed Transfer (GT) Pathways General Education Curriculum, which includes courses guaranteed to transfer to most bachelor's degrees at Colorado's public colleges and universities. CU Boulder participates in this program, though not all GT Pathways courses apply to every degree CU Boulder offers. GT Pathways courses are proposed and reviewed through the CDHE's General Education Council, which comprises representatives from Colorado public two-year and four-year institutions of higher education.

CU Boulder also participates in the CDHE-organized system of Statewide Transfer Articulation Agreements (STAAs), which provide structure for students to complete a 60-credit associate degree "with designation" in a specific academic discipline, with guaranteed transfer (upon admission) and application of the full 60-credit degree toward bachelor's degree requirements, and with no more than 60 additional credits required to complete the bachelor's degree. STAAs were developed by faculty from across the state in 37 different areas and are reviewed and revised as needed every five years by faculty from two- and four-year institutions, convened by CDHE and the General Education Council. These reviews help to ensure that the agreements remain current with change in disciplines and professions, are easy to understand by students and families, and are free of roadblocks to completion based on student, advisor, and faculty experience.

4.A.4. The institution maintains and exercises authority over the prerequisites for courses, rigor of courses, expectations for student learning, access to learning resources, and faculty qualifications for all its programs, including dual credit programs. It ensures that its dual credit courses or programs for high school students are equivalent in learning outcomes and levels of achievement to its higher education curriculum.

4.A.4. In accordance with the Laws of the Regents, CU Boulder faculty maintain authority over the curriculum, including all prerequisites for courses (see 3.C.2.). Course prerequisites and student learning outcomes are determined by the academic unit or its designated curriculum committee with input from the faculty teaching the course for each program. These prerequisites are designed to ensure that students have the necessary foundational knowledge and skills to succeed in a particular course.

A specialized instance of course prerequisites inheres in the partnerships between CU Boulder's College of Engineering and Applied Science with Western Colorado University (WCU) and Colorado Mesa University (CMU) to offer bachelor of science degrees (see 3.A.3.). Initially, students take two years of classes at WCU or CMU, taught and billed by these institutions. To transfer to CU Boulder's Partnership program, students at WCU, for instance, must fulfill one of two pathways:

- Pathway 1: Complete a two-course calculus sequence and one physical science course (both at college level) with at least a B grade and maintain a 3.0 GPA.
- Pathway 2: Complete specific first- and second-year courses as listed on the current Program Sheet or Degree Plan, maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

Detailed requirements are outlined at Western Colorado University's Engineering Partnership page and Colorado Mesa University's Engineering Partnership page. CU Boulder monitors student progress in the first two years to determine their readiness for upper-division courses. The partnership faculty director works closely with the faculty teaching courses in the first two years to ensure that students will have the prerequisite knowledge needed for upper division courses. Successful completion of these initial courses leads to admission into the CU Partnership program. In the final two years, students pay CU

Boulder tuition and are taught by CU faculty stationed full time at WCU or CMU, adhering to the same standards as Boulder-based faculty.

Regent Policy 4 designates the dean of each college or school as responsible for academic and administrative matters, including curriculum. The ultimate authority for academic matters at CU Boulder is the provost, to whom the deans of the colleges and schools report. All these levels of governance maintain academic rigor and set expectations for student learning. The quality of the education CU Boulder gives its students is assessed and confirmed regularly by the program review process (see 3.A.1. and 4.A.1.), which also engages all these levels of governance. The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) makes recommendations to the provost for action on the part of the department and its college or school; those actions are then reported back to and assessed by ARPAC in subsequent years. This iterative process of self-improvement ensures that academic programs maintain a consistently high quality that meets the standards for academic rigor and effectiveness appropriate to an institution of CU Boulder's mission and status.

Specific processes for course review, assessment of access to learning resources, and review of faculty credentials assist in maintaining academic rigor and effectiveness. The approval and review process for new and existing courses, academic programs, and other academic credentials is described in 3.A.1. and 4.A.1. Access to and quality of learning resources are discussed in 3.D.1., 3.D.2. and 3.D.4. The qualifications of and review processes for faculty are discussed in 3.C.3. and 3.C.4.

While CU Boulder does not offer dual enrollment courses or programs, the university does provide a concurrent High School Access Program, allowing high school students to earn college credit by completing CU Boulder courses.

4.A.5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.

4.A.5. CU Boulder continues to maintain specialized accreditation or various academic programs, demonstrating its commitment to meeting rigorous educational standards. The law school (Colorado Law) remains accredited by the American Bar Association and is preparing for a site evaluation/re-accreditation in the 2025-26 academic year. Similarly, the Leeds School of Business holds accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and the College of Music is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). The Department of Journalism is recognized by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. The PhD in Clinical Psychology program is accredited by the American Psychological Association.

In the College of Engineering and Applied Science, undergraduate programs pursue specialized accreditation through the Engineering Accreditation Commission or the Computing Accreditation Commission of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). The most recent review took place in AY 2023-2024. Four new programs are expected to gain initial accreditation according to the ABET Exit Statements shared at the conclusion of the in-person site visit: Biomedical Engineering (BS); Mechanical Engineering (BS) CU-Western Colorado University Partnership Program; Computer Science (BS) CU-Western Colorado University Partnership Program; and Electrical & Computer Engineering (BS) CU-Colorado Mesa University Partnership Program. ABET will vote in July 2024, and final accreditation letters will be sent in August 2024.

The master's in Speech-Language Pathology (MA) and the doctorate in Audiology (AuD) are accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The University of Colorado's Museum of Natural History, whose rostered faculty teach in the MS in Museum Studies program, holds accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.

4.A.6. The institution evaluates the success of its graduates. The institution ensures that the credentials it represents as preparation for advanced study or employment accomplish these purposes. For all programs, the institution looks to indicators it deems appropriate to its mission.

4.A.6. CU Boulder has enhanced its methods for assessing graduate success. The Office of Data & Analytics (ODA), in collaboration with the University of Colorado system office and Lightcast, has developed alumni employment surveys for graduates dating from 1997 to the present (see 1.B.1. and 3.A.1.). These profiles for undergraduate alumni include data on salaries, job titles and employers, detailed by school or college and major, with additional filters for those who pursued graduate studies. For graduate alumni, the profiles maintain similar categories and functionalities. CU Boulder also monitors the initial post-graduation destinations of all its degree recipients through its Graduate Destinations Survey, conducted six months after graduation. This survey provides detailed information on the industries and sectors where recent graduates work, their geographical locations, their salary levels, and their graduate school enrollments, with the results broken down by major and degree level (bachelor's, master's, doctoral).

CU Boulder also tracks the success of its students in particular postgraduation programs and professional fields. As required by its accreditor, the American Bar Association, the law school tracks and publicizes bar passage rates and employment outcomes for its graduates. The Office of Top Scholarships tracks CU Boulder students' impressive achievements in becoming winners or finalists for scholarships/fellowships such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Truman and Fulbright, among others. The Peace Corps, which annually announces the colleges and universities producing the most Peace Corps volunteers, tracks CU Boulder at No. 4 for total Peace Corps volunteers among large universities.

4.B.1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.

4.B.1. In its final action related to CU Boulder's 2020 comprehensive review, HLC required an embedded monitoring report in the Year 4 Assurance Review on CU's implementation of a regular collection and use of student learning assessments to improve student learning. Building upon work that had just begun in 2019-2020, we are pleased to report that CU Boulder has now developed and implemented a systematic approach to assessing student learning at the undergraduate level. This approach is characterized by systematic processes, substantial faculty involvement, and strategic partnerships within the university, all aimed at fostering continuous improvement in academic and co-curricular offerings. Work is now underway to implement a similar approach to assessing student learning at the graduate level.

Undergraduate program assessment

Starting in the 2019-2020 academic year, CU Boulder implemented a [campuswide undergraduate program learning assessment process](#),facilitated by the Office of Data & Analytics in partnership with the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment (see also 3.A.2.).

Faculty drive the decision-making and priority-setting functions of a [4-year assessment cycle](#). The cycle begins with a [planning year](#), followed by a 3-year implementation and reporting phase. The Office of Data & Analytics Assessment team works with faculty in an academic unit throughout the year by providing guidance, resources and monitoring progress via multiple check points. Each program identifies a faculty liaison. After an initial kickoff meeting with program liaisons to outline expectations for the year, faculty work collaboratively to identify program learning outcomes and enter them into the [catalog,](#) and complete a curriculum-mapping exercise to identify where students progress on the identified learning outcomes. Finally, faculty develop a 3-year assessment plan. During each of these three years, the academic unit reports on the assessment process and results from that year.

Undergraduate programs are divided into [four cohorts for the assessment process](#). This segmentation allows for tailored support from the Office of Data & Analytics (see 4.B.3.).

- Arts and Sciences (Social Sciences Division)
- Engineering, College of Media, Communication and Information, College of Business, and the School of Education
- Arts and Sciences (Arts and Humanities Division)
- Arts and Sciences (Natural Sciences Division) and the Program in Environmental Design

By the 2023-2024 academic year, 93% of programs had established learning outcomes, and 86% had completed the assessment planning process. The Social Sciences division, the first cohort, saw 89% of its programs successfully complete all steps in its 4-year planning cycle by the 2022-2023 academic year, including an assessment plan and three annual reports. The Office of Data & Analytics Assessment Team regularly updates the vice provost for academic planning and assessment on their activities. Upon completion of the assessment cycle, academic units re-engage in a planning year as an opportunity to reflect upon and learn from their previous three years and establish a plan for the subsequent three years.

To avoid redundancy of efforts, programs with specialized accreditations that require ongoing learning assessment and assurance have the option to [submit a form](#), reviewed by the Office of Data & Analytics, detailing their assessment activities.

Graduate program assessment

Now that systematic assessment of learning assessment is in place for undergraduate programs, the implementation process for graduate programs is underway. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Office of Data and Analytics and the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment collaborated with the Graduate School to initiate a structured assessment of graduate programs. They have adopted a two-phase plan for this purpose:

Phase 1 (January 2024 - December 2026): Focus on developing the capacity for assessment. By the end of this phase, each graduate program will:

- Establish program learning outcomes (to be completed by December 2025)
- Identify direct and indirect evidence sources for assessing student learning
- Begin preliminary assessment activities

Phase 2 (Starting fall 2026): Concentrate on the full engagement in the assessment cycle. By the conclusion of Phase 2, all graduate programs will:

- Complete a full assessment cycle
- Submit a comprehensive assessment plan and report

The progress formally began during the spring of 2024. Doctoral programs have identified program liaisons, and the Graduate School held a kickoff meeting in April of 2024 to outline work to be completed during the 2024-2025 academic year.

Additionally, the Graduate School, in collaboration with the Office of Data & Analytics and the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment, is enhancing its focus on assessing individual student performance and progress within each program. As part of new "Graduate School Guidelines for Student Academic Progress and Success and Procedures for Dismissal," published in May 2024, an annual unit-level review will analyze each student's learning and progress toward their degree, and students who are designated as not making sufficient progress will be tracked by the Graduate School. We expect to report on the implementation of this initiative in our 2030 Assurance Argument.

Co-curricular assessment

The Division of Student Affairs employs a continuous improvement approach for its yearly assessment planning and reporting. This approach measures how well the co-curricular and extracurricular programs, services, and activities sponsored by Student Affairs meet the learning and development outcomes the division has established. Student Affairs' Office of Planning, Assessment and Data Analytics (PANDA) provides comprehensive support through training, resources, consultations and assistance. PANDA helps both unit and division leaders create and maintain assessment plans. These plans detail each unit's mission, objectives, learning and operational outcomes and data collection and analysis priorities for the academic year.

PANDA assists in every phase of the assessment process, including setting outcomes, gathering and analyzing data, reporting results, and refining programs to enhance student learning and development. Additionally, PANDA ensures that the units' learning and development goals align with CU Boulder's common curriculum and the objectives of the first-year experience (see 3.B.1. and 3.B.2.).

The learning goals and outcomes of the first-year experience itself are assessed via survey, as described in 3.B.2.

4.B.2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.

4.B.2. CU Boulder emphasizes the use of assessment in both curricular and co-curricular programs to enhance student learning. The process is systematic and involves identifying learning outcomes and evaluating these outcomes through either specialized accreditation or an internal process led by the Office of Data & Analytics (see 4.B.1.) and the vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment. Undergraduate programs outline annual activities in their annual assessment plan. Programs submit

annual reports outlining their activities, key findings, and lessons learned/next steps. The prompt for lessons learned/next steps is, "Lessons learned/next steps may include programmatic changes, improvements to the curriculum, or future steps for action. Lessons learned may also include reflections on the assessment method, its value, and potential changes to the assessment process." In addition to consultation with the Office of Data & Analytics Assessment Team, programs may consult with and use the resource repository.

Through annual assessment reporting by academic units, the Office of Data & Analytics has gathered evidence that assessment is resulting in efforts to make programmatic changes to improve student learning. For example, the Department of Journalism assessed students' proficiency in writing and editing, finding strengths in basic mechanics but areas for improvement in contextual skills and critical thinking. This led to a curriculum revision focusing on more than just basic writing skills, aiming to enhance students' ability to contextualize information and use language effectively. Similarly, the College of Engineering and Applied Science has a continuous improvement plan, with annual reports that lead to curriculum adjustments. One recent example comes from the Integrated Design Engineering Program, which modified assignments to better address global considerations in engineering solutions.

As described in 3.A.1. and 4.A.2., descriptions of program learning assessment are part of academic program review. In the co-curricular realm, CU Boulder employs the Assessment Cycle of Continuous Improvement, which requires that Student Affairs units use assessment findings to refine programs and services (see 4.B.1.).

4.B.3. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty, instructional and other relevant staff members.

4.B.3. CU Boulder demonstrates an evolved and evolving approach to assessing and enhancing teaching and learning, focusing on classroom assessment, program assessment and assessment of co-curricular activities.

Program assessment practice

As discussed in 4.B.1. and 4.B.2., CU Boulder has established a comprehensive approach to support faculty in designing and carrying out a cycle of program learning assessment that is appropriate for and tailored to the academic discipline and the faculty's agreed-upon learning goals (see 4.B.2.). Initially, the Office of Data & Analytics Assessment Team organizes meetings with department chairs and faculty given the role of assessment liaisons to outline the annual expectations and available resources. Throughout the year, the Assessment Team provides ongoing support for the department faculty through reminders, consultations, and feedback on their developing assessment plans of academic programs.

To enhance the assessment process, CU Boulder continuously improves how the program learning assessment cycle is designed. Based on the departments' experiences and faculty feedback from the first cycle of planning and assessing learning outcomes for undergraduate programs, in 2023-2024 the Office of Data & Analytics introduced a second assessment pathway, known as the "focused pathway," to complement the "standard pathway." Both pathways involve similar steps, like outcome development and mapping, but the focused pathway aims at in-depth assessment at multiple times and

through various methods. Starting in the 2023-2024 academic year, this option was made available to the first cohort of units commencing their second cycle of planning and assessing learning outcomes, the Division of Social Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Office of Data & Analytics is supporting this pathway through resources tailored to this approach. Several departments have chosen the "focused pathway" in anticipation of completing their assessment plans in 2024-2025.

Co-curricular assessment practice

The Student Affairs Office of Planning, Assessment and Data Analytics (PANDA) uses an assessment liaison model, ensuring each Student Affairs (SA) unit has a trained individual capable of managing assessment plans. These assessment liaisons, chosen from each Student Affairs unit's professional staff, undergo thorough training and attend monthly meetings led by PANDA. These sessions focus on integrating best practices into their assessment activities, covering topics like equity-centered practices, effective methodologies, data interpretation, and using data to enhance student learning and development. Additionally, PANDA provides resource guides and extra training opportunities available to all campus staff, though primarily designed for Student Affairs professionals.

Classroom assessment practice

At CU Boulder, faculty evaluation processes, including reappointment, tenure and promotion as well as annual merit, adheres to University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 1009) by incorporating multiple measures of teaching assessments, one of which must be student evaluations of classroom teaching. The Faculty Course Questionnaire (FCQ) is the chosen instrument for this at CU Boulder, and similar practices are followed at the Denver and Colorado Springs campuses.

On an ongoing basis, CU Boulder seeks to improve the FCQ as a tool for assessing students' classroom experiences. In 2017, the FCQ moved to an online-only administration due to environmental concerns; subsequent efforts to improve the response rate on the FCQ were successful. Due to the pandemic-induced shift to remote learning, FCQ results from spring and summer 2020 were withheld from use for faculty evaluation processes as per the provost's directive. At that same time, CU Boulder introduced a revised FCQ format designed by a multi-campus team of faculty and staff members and piloted in 2016-2017. The new FCQ questions reflect current research on student feedback methods and focus on teaching practices that foster a supportive learning environment.

FCQs capture students' perceptions of their course experiences, offering instructors formative feedback to enhance teaching quality. However, these questionnaires are not definitive evaluations of an instructor's performance or the overall course effectiveness. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), in collaboration with the Office of Data & Analytics, provides guidelines for faculty to ensure FCQs effectively contribute to teaching improvement and annual reviews.

Other resources for improving assessment practice

CTL advocates for educational excellence through faculty engagement and offers numerous services to support the instructional community in improving assessment of student learning. Among these are:

- The Canvas Grading Faculty Working Group , part of the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative, which aims to establish student-centered grading practices in Canvas. This group addresses faculty needs for efficient grading tools and aligns with student desires for transparent and timely grading feedback.

- CTL's [Learning Assessment Micro-Grants](#), which support individuals or small teams of faculty to plan and conduct small projects to assess student learning or develop assessment tools and strategies.
- The Arts and Sciences Support of Education Through Technology (ASSETT) program, which offers [training to faculty](#) in gauging what is needed and what is working in their classes, especially with respect to learning technologies

Other campus resources for faculty and departments that want to improve their assessment of student learning include the [Teaching Quality Framework Initiative](#), which helps departments develop multiple measures of evaluating teaching effectiveness, and the Center for STEM Learning, which offers [resources for improving assessment of learning](#) in STEM fields.

4.C. The institution pursues educational improvement through goals and strategies that improve retention, persistence and completion rates in its degree and certificate programs.

4.C.1. The institution has defined goals for student retention, persistence and completion that are ambitious, attainable, and appropriate to its mission, student populations and educational offerings.

4.C.1. CU Boulder has consistently aligned its strategic imperatives with its mission, emphasizing the recruitment, retention and graduation of students who not only achieve their educational goals but also embody the university's core values (see 1.A.1.). This commitment to student success is considered a moral imperative by the institution. The campus, in line with the University of Colorado System Strategic Plan, has established [ambitious yet feasible goals](#) for undergraduate student retention and completion. These objectives are regularly reviewed, with [annual progress reports](#) submitted to the Board of Regents.

CU Boulder is committed to enhancing student success, focusing on increasing retention and graduation rates. Since 2017, CU Boulder has set ambitious goals to uplift these metrics, aiming for an 80% six-year graduation rate and a 93% first-to-second-year retention rate by 2023. Progress is evident, with notable increases in both graduation and retention rates. Particularly, the university has seen an improvement in the four-year graduation rate and maintained high retention rates among Colorado residents, non-residents and diverse student populations.

Data Table

Metric	2017 Baseline	2023 Target	2023 Actual	Change from 2017
Six-Year Graduation Rate	69% (2011 cohort)	80%	75% (2017 cohort)	+6%
First to Second Year Retention Rate	88% (2016 cohort)	93%	89% (2022 cohort)	+1%
Four-Year Graduation Rate	46% (2013 cohort)	N/A	57% (2019 cohort)	+11
Retention Rate - Colorado Residents	N/A	N/A	90%	Stable high
Retention Rate - Non-Residents	N/A	N/A	88%	Stable high

Retention Rate - Diverse Students	N/A	N/A	87%	New high

Analysis

CU Boulder's strategic efforts are reflected in the upward trend of its six-year graduation rate, which increased from 69% to 75%. Although this is below the 80% target, the positive trajectory underscores the effectiveness of the university's initiatives. Remarkably, the four-year graduation rate has seen a leap from 46% to 57% for the 2019 cohort, indicating accelerated student progress. The first-to-second-year retention rate also improved, reaching an all-time high of 89% for the 2022 cohort, demonstrating the university's ability to engage and retain students. Consistently high retention rates among different student demographics further highlight CU Boulder's inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Knowing that student success is a mission-critical priority and ethical imperative at CU Boulder, university leadership began the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative in 2021 (see 1.A.5. and 4.C.3.) to raise concerted work on student success to the highest level of campus urgency and visibility. While it is always difficult to attribute overall gains in student success to any single project or action, the fact that first-to-second-year retention rates are currently at an all-time high encourages optimism that BUS efforts are making a difference.

4.C.2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.

4.C.2. At CU Boulder, the Office of Data & Analytics annually updates and disseminates [information on student retention, student completion, and time to degree](#) to both the campus community and the broader public. These data form the foundation for various analytical activities across the university. Furthermore, the CU Boulder administration relies on these metrics to report on retention across diverse student demographics to the University of Colorado Board of Regents (see 4.C.1.). The Colorado Department of Higher Education, an external interested party, also uses this data to evaluate retention and graduation rates across the state.

CU Boulder's data analysis of [undergraduate retention and graduation rates](#) includes categorizing the information by entry cohort, school or college, and student characteristics. Additionally, the university analyzes other critical factors contributing to undergraduate student success, such as retention and graduation rates by student residence hall and in residential academic programs. These data on retention and graduation are then analyzed alongside undergraduate survey results on the new student experience and on [campus culture](#). Finally, as part of CU Boulder's last HLC Quality Initiative, the Office of Data & Analytics has created the publicly accessible [Wedge Student Tracking Tool](#) to help deans, department chairs and associate department chairs analyze at what points in their academic careers students enter or exit particular majors.

For graduate students, the [Data & Analytics website](#) similarly provides data on graduation rates and time to degree completion. The website also offers insights on social climate, mentoring and research experiences from the [Campus Culture survey](#) and from the [gradSERU Student Experience](#) survey. These elements are integral to the unit performance analyses conducted during academic program reviews and assist the Graduate School in formulating academic and student life initiatives.

A few examples of where this data analysis is then used in academic review and decision-making include:

- During academic program reviews (see 3.A.1. and 4.A.1.), departments and the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee use this information as part of assessing unit performance.
- The Office of Undergraduate Education and the Buff Undergraduate Success initiative leverage these data to design and implement initiatives aimed at enhancing undergraduate student re-enrollment and, consequently, retention rates (see 4.C.3.).
- The Office of Undergraduate Education and the Division of Student Affairs, separately and in partnership, use these comprehensive analyses to support the strategic planning of academic and student life initiatives (see 4.C.3.).

4.C.3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.

4.C.3. CU Boulder continues to use data on student retention, retention, and completion to inform and enhance its academic program review and planning processes. While the university's academic program review process is of long standing, as described in our 2019-2020 Assurance Review, since 2020 we have both modified the program review process and undertaken new academic initiatives to emphasize the integration of qualitative and quantitative evidence to gauge and improve student success. Here are key initiatives implemented since 2020 to boost student retention and success:

Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative

The [Buff Undergraduate Success](#) (BUS) initiative (see 1.A.5 and 4.C.1.) leverages undergraduate student data and qualitative surveys to identify and address gaps in retention and graduation rates and their causes. Each semester, the BUS Leadership Implementation Team prioritizes projects that potentially impact student retention and graduation, especially for marginalized groups. Achievements to date include, for example, developing a campus affinity space directory, centralizing information on tutoring resources, revising academic preparation standards, creating unified standards for undergraduate academic warning, and enhancing campus communication efficiency, sponsoring the new Innovating Large Courses Initiative, and sponsoring the creation of the common curriculum. [Aims for spring and summer 2024](#) include designing a comprehensive vision for wraparound student support, formulating recommendations to improve math instruction and academic support, and undertaking next steps in acquiring a new degree audit system.

Early alert pilot program

An example of an implemented BUS project that directly uses student retention and graduation data to enhance advising and improve student success is the First-Year Student Success (FYSS) dashboard. A home-grown centralized resource for student success data, information, and insights designed by the Office of Data & Analytics in collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Education, the FYSS dashboard provides access to curated student success data and metrics and includes predictive analytics insights. The FYSS dashboard allows users to identify students who have a low likelihood of reenrolling and may need additional support.

In fall 2022, building on lessons learned from [an earlier effort in 2018](#) and employing the FYSS dashboard, CU Boulder initiated the Early Alert Program pilot in the College of Arts & Sciences, aiming to make data actionable to enhance student success. The Early Alert Program progresses through these phases:

- Data collection for predictive analytics to identify at-risk students.
- Identification of appropriate stakeholders for outreach.
- Timely, personalized intervention to connect students with support services.
- Evaluation of intervention effectiveness and overall impact.

Highlights from the 2022-2023 Early Alert campaign include:

- A 17% higher than expected re-enrollment rate for College of Arts and Sciences sophomores participating in the program.
- A 14% higher re-enrollment rate and an average 0.38 increase in GPA for students who received at least two course alerts (see 3.D.3.) and engaged with an academic advisor.

Math success initiative

In fall 2023, the provost charged the deans of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering and Applied Science to evaluate math education, especially within the calculus sequence. This effort, supported by the Buff Undergraduate Success Initiative, involves faculty and gathers insights from all interested parties in calculus-relevant majors/minors, tutoring and academic support services, and advisors. The project's scope encompasses evaluating and improving math placement, curriculum structure, teaching methods, learning outcomes and support services. The objectives are to reduce DFW (drop, fail, withdrawal) rates and bridge equity gaps, ensuring students acquire essential knowledge for progression. Additionally, the project seeks to standardize learning outcomes aligning with both math and applied math requirements and other departmental needs, and to create a unified, well-promoted academic support system that might include tutoring, learning assistants and peer mentors.

4.C.4. The institution's processes and methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs reflect good practice. (Institutions are not required to use IPEDS definitions in their determination of persistence or completion rates. Institutions are encouraged to choose measures that are suitable to their student populations, but institutions are accountable for the validity of their measures.)

4.C.4. At CU Boulder, the methodologies for collecting and analyzing information on student retention, persistence, and program completion are in line with the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) standards. This practice has been consistent since the university initiated the tracking of these metrics. [CU Boulder's adoption of IPEDS methodologies](#) ensures a comprehensive monitoring of student success across various dimensions, including racial/ethnic identity, degree level and major. These categories help the university to assess and address the needs of its diverse student population effectively, facilitating targeted interventions and support where necessary.

4. Summary.

CU Boulder demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs through a rigorous, regular process of program review that engages faculty at all levels of review and that results in

recommendations acted upon by academic programs and college, school and campus administration; through well-established practices for transfer credit evaluation; through departmental, college/school and campus policies and processes for course, curriculum, and degree proposal and review; and through maintaining specialized accreditation for specific programs. The establishment and assessment of student learning outcomes, previously a somewhat inconsistent practice, is now acculturated into university norms in a way that is designed by the faculty and tailored to the nature of the wide range of disciplines at CU Boulder. Fully in place for undergraduate programs, the establishment and assessment of learning outcomes is now being implemented for graduate programs alike. Through its Buff Undergraduate Success initiative and other efforts, CU Boulder is implementing Academic Futures recommendations for improving the evaluation of teaching and for improving the success of its undergraduate and graduate students.

Criterion 5. Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, processes and planning are sufficient to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational offerings, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

5.A. Through its administrative structures and collaborative processes, the institution's leadership demonstrates that it is effective and enables the institution to fulfill its mission.

5.A.1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.

5.A.1. The roles of shared faculty governance and student governance at the University of Colorado are established by the Laws of the Regents (5.A and 7.D). At the University of Colorado (CU) system level, the Board of Regents engages shared governance through frequent scheduled meetings and other opportunities for input. Regent-led subcommittees of the board are designed to facilitate in-depth understanding between the regents and campus leadership. Each year, the CU system office organizes and publishes an annual calendar of meetings, deliverables and any new initiatives that the CU system and its regents may choose to navigate in the upcoming year. The calendar helps each campus plan internal conversations and decision-making, anticipating the system's timeline. For example, each campus must present an initial budget to the regents each February as a look ahead to the upcoming new fiscal year. CU Boulder's Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning engages campus leadership (provost, chief operating officer, and their direct reports including deans) in discussing a draft of this budget in advance of this presentation, and again before the final budget is presented to the Board of Regents in June. These groups have a chance to ask questions and make suggestions and/or recommendations before the budget is finalized.

The CU system office and the Board of Regents are advised by three intercampus shared governance bodies, the CU Faculty Council, CU Staff Council, and the Intercampus Student Forum, each of which includes membership from each campus within the system. Each Board of Regents meeting includes a report from all three governance bodies. At CU Boulder, the chancellor, provost, chief operating officer, deans of the Graduate School and of undergraduate education, and vice chancellor for student affairs are similarly advised by faculty, staff and student shared governance bodies. The role of advising campus leadership is noted in the various bodies' bylaws, as reflected, for example, in the Staff Council Bylaws. The Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) represents both TTT and teaching-track faculty and includes elected representation from every academic unit. The CU Boulder Staff Council elects representatives by staff area and recently expanded its membership to include professional research associates and assistants. Students are represented by the elected CU Student Government (CUSG) and Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG). Both the campus policy and the Academic Affairs policy on policy proposal and adoption require consultation with these four shared governance bodies before CU Boulder policy or Academic Affairs policy is enacted or revised.

The chancellor, provost and chief operating officer hold monthly meetings during the academic year with the Shared Governance Group, comprising the leadership of the CUSG, GPSG, BFA, and Staff Council governance bodies; these meetings allow mutual sharing of ideas and concerns across all governance groups. One recent example of an issue on which the four governance bodies consulted, both individually and through the Shared Governance Group, is a plan to revise the academic calendar.

In addition, representatives from all four governance bodies participated in the design of the new budget model and in the Strategic Facilities Visioning Initiative that led to the 2021 Campus Master Plan (see 5.B.1.).

In turn, members of campus leadership serve as liaisons to the four governance bodies and their committees. The vice chancellor for academic planning and assessment serves as administrative liaison to the BFA Executive Committee; the CFO and the vice chancellor for academic resource management serve as administrative liaisons to the BFA Budget and Planning Committee; the dean of students serves as administrative liaison to CUSG) the dean of the Graduate School serves as administrative liaison to GPSG; and the assistant director of operations for the Division of Human Resources serves as administrative liaison to Staff Council.

The chancellor, chief operating officer and provost are also advised on specific areas by a number of other groups comprising faculty, students and/or staff. Examples include:

- The [Fee Advisory Board](#), composed of student government leaders, campus leaders and finance representatives, advises the provost and chief operating officer on all proposed changes or increases to student fees.
- The [Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee](#) (ARMAC) advises the provost on physical and financial resource matters vital to the academic mission of the campus, such as effective use of academic space, faculty compensation analysis and policy, academic program resource analysis and strategic academic resource planning and priorities. Membership includes faculty representatives from each school and college and the University Libraries, the BFA Budget & Planning Committee chair, undergraduate and graduate student representatives, and staff support members from the Division of Continuing Education and the Offices of the Provost, Academic Resource Management, Budget and Fiscal Planning, Data & Analytics and Space Optimization.
- The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC), which advises the provost and the deans on planning and priorities for all academic units, institutes and the University Libraries, and which advises the chancellor and the provost on planning and priorities for the Office of Academic Affairs (see 3.A.1. and 4.A.1.). The recommendations of ARMAC (see above) are informed by ARPAC's recommendations.
- The [Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee (VCAC)](#) advises the provost on the comprehensive review, tenure and promotion of tenure-track faculty on the CU Boulder campus. The committee's membership typically comprises 12 to 16 professor-rank faculty members representing the range of CU Boulder colleges and schools. Members are recruited by the vice provost and associate vice chancellor for faculty affairs in collaboration with the provost and the BFA Executive Committee.

Some recent examples of specific shared governance accomplishments related to campus fiscal, physical and human resources include:

- In September 2023, the provost [approved a measure](#) that ensures that teaching and clinical faculty receive a minimum $4,000 base-building raise upon promotion to associate teaching or clinical professor and a minimum $6,500 base-building raise upon promotion to full teaching or clinical professor. This approval adopted a recommendation by ARMAC and affirmed a 2023 BFA resolution that originated the recommendation.

- In June 2022, the provost approved an ARMAC recommendation to increase the raise for promotion to tenured associate professor from $2,000 to $6,500 and to increase the raise for promotion to full professor from $3,000 to $10,500.
- As of spring 2022, CU Boulder began remitting mandatory student fees for graduate students on appointment. This action was a top priority of GPSG and carried out a recommendation of the 2019 Graduate Task Force on Stipends and Benefits, which included leadership, university staff and graduate student representation.
- In 2022, CU Boulder took action to observe Juneteenth as a campus holiday. Juneteenth was observed as a "floating holiday" for staff in 2022 and 2023 and will be a fixed campus holiday beginning on June 19, 2024. Beginning in 2023, the university has sponsored campus events to mark the Juneteenth holiday. These actions responded to and incorporated recommendations by student, faculty and staff shared governance.

5.A.2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.

5.A.2. With the support of the Office of Data & Analytics, CU Boulder uses data in every aspect of its administrative operations to reach informed decisions. Some examples:

- Enrollment Management partners with Data & Analytics to project the size of the student body, including the size of the incoming class of first-year and transfer students, leading to accurate revenue and support planning for all campus units that need these data points to inform their businesses. The Office of Financial Aid needs the enrollment data and budget allocation to inform how much aid is given out and to whom. Admissions needs the data to understand its target numbers including the demographics of those targets. Housing and Dining uses enrollment data to plan dormitory capacity and food requirements. Student Affairs, the Office of Undergraduate Education and student support offices across campus all use these enrollment data to inform and plan their introductory and wraparound services. Enrollment Management also uses ODA's projections to deploy strategy and resources to attain campus enrollment targets.
- The Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning (BFP) participates in the state's revenue forecast updates. These quarterly meetings provide meaningful state data trends in revenue collection, which directly inform the ability of the state to invest in its core infrastructure including higher education.
- BFP uses data to help predict and plan tuition revenue in both current and future years. The campus tuition model uses enrollment data and projections from ODA, including retention metrics, to account for student movement between semesters or years.
- The Campus Controller's Office (CCO) uses various data sources as it prepares its Facilities and Administrative recharge proposal to the federal government. This funding source is essential to providing an environment for researchers to do federal and other research on campus.
- Responding to school/college requests and developed with shared governance input, the Office of Data & Analytics and the Office of Academic Resource Management have partnered on launching the Course Enrollment Insights Tool (fall 2023), which provides class-level historical and current enrollment data for all academic programs to inform course planning via an easy-to-use dashboard. The tool assists colleges, schools, and departments in examining enrollment patterns for individual courses (and course sections) to make data-informed scheduling decisions easier.

- The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) uses a common data set to inform its review of and recommendations for each academic department and program.

5.A.3. The institution's administration ensures that faculty and, when appropriate, staff and students are involved in setting academic requirements, policy and processes through effective collaborative structures.

5.A.3. Regent Policy 5 assigns the faculty the "principal role in originating academic policy and standards related to the initiation and direction of all courses, curricula, and degree offerings; admissions criteria, grading and standards for continuation; regulation of student academic conduct; and determination of candidates for honors and degrees." Each school or college at CU Boulder has its own faculty curriculum committee to review and approve new and revised courses and curricula. The Academic Affairs policy on policy proposal and adoption requires consultation with faculty and student shared governance bodies before CU Boulder academic policy is enacted or revised (see 5.A.1.). The Graduate School Executive Advisory Council, comprising faculty and graduate student representation, advises on academic policy related to graduate education.

Article 4 of the Laws of the Regents and Regent Policy 4 specify that new degree programs and academic units, as well as degree program and academic unit discontinuance, must be approved by the Board of Regents. At CU Boulder, proposals for new degree programs and academic units originate with the faculty and are developed and reviewed according to campus review procedure guidelines (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.). Requests for degree program discontinuance or academic unit discontinuance may originate from a number of sources (a dean, the campus program review committee [ARPAC], the provost, the chancellor, the University of Colorado president, the Board of Regents or a department or a chair with concurrence of the dean) and are reviewed according to the CU Boulder Academic Program Discontinuance policy. Faculty, staff, students and relevant shared governance bodies have been involved in the development, approval, and implementation of the common curriculum (see 3.B.1. and 3.B.2.).

The CU Boulder Honor Code specifies that faculty have the sole authority to levy academic sanctions (e.g., grade penalties) for academic dishonesty. The Honor Code Advisory Board, which is composed of up to four faculty members and at least four students, including at least one graduate student, imposes nonacademic sanctions for academic dishonesty; students may appeal sanctions to the Honor Code Appeal Board, comprising university community members, students, faculty and/or staff appointed by the director of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as the chair of the BFA or their designee.

5.B. The institution's resource base supports its educational offerings and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.

5.B.1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.

5.B.1.

Operational staff

CU's educational programs owe their high quality to a team of staff whose contributions make it possible to support fiscal and human resources and physical and technological infrastructure at the level appropriate to a world-class university.

CU Boulder has seen its staff numbers rise significantly in the last decade. The headcount of university staff and classified staff (fall census numbers) rose from 3,724 in 2014 to 5,070 in 2023 (36% increase). Hiring and retaining excellent staff hinge upon offering competitive salaries to new hires and compensating continuing employees fairly. For staff employees, Human Resources (HR) sets a competitive market salary range for each position based on the duties and requirements of the job at the time each employee is hired or promoted. In FY 2020-21, CU Boulder completed implementation of the Compensation Framework Initiative (CFI), which developed a compensation code system that aligns CU Boulder staff jobs. This compensation framework is the foundation for categorizing jobs across campus, establishing standard pay ranges and enhancing career progression concepts. The CFI work was in progress prior to the passage of Colorado's Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA), effective January 1, 2021, but the new law raised the priority for implementing the work of the CFI since a compensation framework helps facilitate further pay equity analysis and decision making. Once the compensation framework was put in place, staff salaries were analyzed; when an inequity was found that could not be explained by one of the factors allowed by the EPEWA, the employee was eligible for an equity increase. As of January 20, 2022, 250 staff members were identified for an equity increase.

In accordance with Regent Policy 11C, "University Staff Salary," CU Boulder administration determines the budget for salary adjustments for university staff and a salary plan to allocate that budget. Performance-based, structural, across-the-board, market, retention and/or equity increases are identified within and funded from the salary plan. HR reviews and approves merit and equity adjustment requests.

The high caliber of CU Boulder's operational staff is aided by processes that extend from recruitment and hiring through ongoing evaluation and professional development.

- Recruiting professional staff starts with a rigorous review of position descriptions, proceeds through analysis to ensure that compensation is appropriate and competitive for the recruitment area, and then entails posting positions through a variety of recruiting websites, including sites that focus on areas of diversity and inclusion. A professional recruiter from Human Resources (HR) is assigned to work with each hiring manager and search committee throughout the recruiting and selection process and provides guidance related to increasing diversity and mitigating bias in hiring. Hiring for postdoctoral fellowship holders and other

nonfaculty research personnel is also managed by HR. Onboarding of new employees is conducted by the hiring manager, department HR liaison and HR.

- Evaluations for classified staff and university staff occur annually based on job-specific criteria as well as core competencies aligned with university values and the Colorado Creed (see 1.A.1.), including integrity/responsibility/ethics, inclusive excellence, innovation, collaboration and communication. CU Boulder uses the Cornerstone platform to streamline and regularize performance management processes, facilitate conversations between employees and managers about performance and employee development and better align work in support of unit goals and the chancellor's strategic imperatives (see 1.A.1.).

- Open enrollment employee courses offered by HR address professional development areas such as skills for difficult conversations, maximizing professional productivity, and diversity and inclusion. Several courses focus on leadership, management and supervision. Organizational training includes training in communication, conflict resolution and building teams, and assessments to improve team process, dynamics or skills. Training for targeted employee populations includes, for example, the CU Employee English Program and Supervisor Learning Journey courses.

- CU Boulder provides opportunities for employees to complete academic courses and credentials including the Leadership and Management Graduate Certificate and provides discounted tuition for the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership. The Employee Tuition Benefit provides a tuition waiver for up to nine credit hours per year. Employees also have free access to noncredit learning opportunities including CU on Coursera courses and LinkedIn Learning instructional videos.

- Offices across campus provide employee training on topics including skills in dealing with discrimination and harassment such as effective bystander intervention, reducing unconscious bias, skills related to accommodations, service animals and disability access, and skills related to diversity, inclusion and equity such as supporting student resiliency, the Intercultural Development Inventory, and LGBTQ+ safe zone training. Programs for personal and career growth and development include a Faculty and Staff Assistance Program (FSAP) providing one-on-one counseling as well as support groups and the Staff Career Development Program. The Ombuds Office offers confidential assistance to employees who wish to explore options to resolve disputes, conflicts and concerns.

Fiscal resources

Support for CU Boulder's educational and research mission comes from diverse sources, including tuition and fees, state appropriations, research contracts and grants, private fundraising and auxiliary operations. Diversification of funding, focused enrollment growth and development of the research enterprise have enabled the campus to increase its overall budget by 67% in the last decade, from $1.35 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2014–15 to $2.26 billion in FY 2023–24. The diversification and growth of revenue sources are demonstrated by increased revenue during this same time span from student tuition and fees (69% increase), contracts and grants (77% increase) and gifts (61% increase). State funding increased by 77% from FY 2014–15 to FY 2023–24 but remains a very low percentage of CU Boulder's revenue (5% in 2023–24).

In FY 2022–23, after a three-year design process, CU Boulder implemented a new budget model for allocation of net tuition. Interviews with campus units and key constituents and experience from the previous Financial Futures initiative had indicated that CU Boulder's longstanding incremental-based budget model lacked transparency, flexibility, and adequate mechanisms to support the university's

strategic and mission-aligned priorities. The design process was undertaken by committees with faculty, staff, student, shared governance and administrative membership as well as all school/college deans and representatives from recent campus initiatives such as the IDEA Council and Academic Futures. Campus input into the new budget model was solicited through 40+ constituent interviews and listening sessions; six thematic listening sessions; nine "Coffee and the Budget" sessions, 23 town hall meetings for faculty and staff in individual schools and colleges; three meetings with each individual school/college dean to review budget model details; ongoing updates to shared governance groups; bi-weekly Strategic Alignment Committee open office hours; various presentations to the Finance Leaders Council and other university groups; and universitywide updates in the CU Boulder Today e-news and through videos and related materials on the Budget and Fiscal Planning website.

As part of the early work of the Budget Model Redesign, the executive sponsors set the following design parameters:

- The Budget Model Redesign will focus on the allocation of net tuition and will not include Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) distributions (including Department Allocation of Indirect Cost Recovery [DAICR]) or state funding.
- The proportionate allocation of net tuition to academic schools and colleges vs. academic and administrative support units will remain at roughly 65% to schools and colleges and 35% to academic and administrative support units.
- Legacy revenue sharing agreements will be evaluated as part of the redesign.
- A strategic fund must be included in the model to provide pooled funds for strategic investment.
- Historical budgets will be funded in Year 1 of model implementation (FY 2022-23), meaning units will be "held harmless" from the impact of new allocation methodologies upon the initial adoption of the new model.

Guided by these parameters, the Strategic Alignment Committee and Design Committee arrived at a budget model in which each school and college will receive a net tuition allocation from the campus comprising up to three sources:

- The core fund allocation will be derived from metrics that the campus decides appropriately reflect costs, recognize accomplishments and promote needed actions.
- The supplemental fund allocation to schools and colleges will be from shared value-driven decisions that appropriately reflect our mission, our strategic priorities and our goals.
- And finally, one part will go toward the strategic fund, to support campus-wide investments.

SAC further articulated the overarching principle that tuition revenue supports the ongoing operations and mission of the university at and across multiple levels and is neither generated nor owned by any individual unit alone. The allocation of net tuition through the model must respond to shifts, spur innovation, support the university's mission as a comprehensive public teaching and research institution and recognize that different schools and colleges will have variable costs (e.g., faculty salaries, class sizes, teaching loads). These variables change over time and should be accounted for in the regular review of core funds and supplemental funds that are allocated to various schools and colleges. The model also recognizes the importance of campus support units to provide services, programs and infrastructure within the university ecosystem, and enables funding to respond flexibly to revenue shifts along with the schools and colleges.

Now in Year 2 of implementation (FY 2023-24), the new budget model has not been without its detractors, as historic budgets have changed in some academic units. However, the new budget model

is essential to creating the fiscal resources for supporting campus priorities supported by faculty, staff and student governance alike, including student success. To ensure the new budget model is effective in supporting CU Boulder's mission and goals, it will undergo a structured review process every three to five years. This structured review will include, but not be limited to, evaluation of model components and rates such as the supplemental funds withholding rate, examination of the retention and graduation incentive, determination of whether to include space costs into the model, and assessment of the impact of the model on research and creative work, diversity, equity and inclusion, and the overall mission of the university as a comprehensive teaching and research institution that serves the public good.

Advancement

CU Boulder Advancement works with the University of Colorado (CU) Foundation, a separate 501c3 organization that manages and invests the assets given by private donors and grantors and provides a budget to support each campus's advancement activities, and with Central CU Advancement, which provides support for all four University of Colorado campuses. The CU Foundation's annual financial statements review fundraising activity, investment performance and the financial condition of the foundation. The entire fundraising operation of the University of Colorado was restructured in 2013, moving some 200 advancement professionals to report to the individual campuses rather than to the CU Foundation. This restructuring, which corresponded with one of the recommendations resulting from CU Boulder's 2010 comprehensive evaluation by the Higher Learning Commission, has not only led to more efficiency and accountability but also fostered significant growth in philanthropic giving at CU Boulder. Total gift, charitable grant and pledge results for CU Boulder have grown from $115.9 million in FY 2013-2014 to $156.1 million in FY 2022-2023. (For comparison purposes, see the 2013-2014 CU Foundation Annual Report and the 2023-23 CU Foundation Audited Financial Statement.)

Physical infrastructure

CU Boulder comprises ~13 million gross square feet in 372 buildings and 1,170 acres of land on five primary properties within or near the city of Boulder: Main Campus, Williams Village, East Campus, CU Boulder South Campus and the Mountain Research Station. The vice chancellor for infrastructure and sustainability oversees the divisions of Environmental Health and Safety; Facilities Operations and Services; Planning, Design and Construction; Real Estate Services; and Sustainability. Each division houses professional staff and building professionals with a variety of appropriate academic degrees and, when applicable, licenses to practice in the state of Colorado.

In 2018, the Division of Infrastructure & Sustainability launched the Strategic Facilities Visioning initiative to ensure that facilities continue to enhance student success and the campus mission while also improving the efficiency and resiliency of our infrastructure well into the future. The Strategic Facilities Visioning executive committee included representation from the Boulder Faculty Assembly, the CU Student Government (CUSG), and the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), and some 180 Strategic Facilities Visioning visionaries including faculty and staff from over 30 schools/colleges, institutes, and administrative support units. The 15-month initiative integrated planning efforts from constituents across campus and resulted in a dynamic facilities planning tool (PREVIEW) that facilitates short- medium-, and long-term decision making through modeling of supply, demand, and options as the educational landscape evolves. Together with the Housing Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan, and Energy Master Plan, Strategic Facilities Visioning provided the foundation for the 2021 Campus Master Plan.

Required on a 10-year cycle by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the Campus Master Plan process began in fall 2020 with an invitation to the campus community to participate in an interactive mapping exercise that engaged hundreds of constituents from schools and colleges, as well as representatives from more than two dozen operational units on campus and from shared governance groups. The team also engaged the local community and city staff to gather valuable insights. Approved by the Board of Regents in February 2022, the Campus Master Plan focuses on the development and maintenance of campus facilities over the next 10 years while also projecting a 30-year overall vision that includes:

- Redistribution of instructional space to relieve congestion in the heart of Main Campus
- Redistribution and development of new research facilities east of the Main Campus core and on East Campus
- Diversification of the mix of uses, ranging from student life spaces to academic spaces, on East Campus and at Williams Village to enhance vibrancy at each location
- Increases in the on-campus housing inventory over the 30-year planning horizon to meet current and future housing needs
- Implementation of a phased approach to renovation and renewal of aging existing on-campus housing
- Continued improvements to existing and historic campus buildings to ensure their ability to provide state-of-the art teaching and research spaces for decades to come
- A focus on multi-modal campus mobility, including pedestrian, transit and parking needs at both the inter- and intra-campus levels
- Preservation and continued improvements to the campus landscape with regard to context, climate, ecology and open space

The capital construction process at CU Boulder is based on state and University of Colorado system policy, including capital policies of the University of Colorado (Administrative Policy Statement [APS] 3002, "Capital Construction and Projects"), the Office of the State Architect and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. Projects are initiated when campus constituents work with the Office of Facilities Management Campus Planning to develop preliminary information, which is vetted through the Capital Governance Subcommittee, made up of a broad group of faculty and staff, before being presented to the Capital Governance Group, comprising the provost and the COO. If the idea is approved, the proposal is further developed and presented to the same groups, and additional campus constituents are invited into the consensus-building process. If the project is approved and funding identified, it proceeds to review and approval by the University of Colorado Design Review Board and the Board of Regents, and then to extensive design development and construction planning. The approved plan and budget request are then forwarded to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and the Office of the State Architect for consideration by the Colorado General Assembly for final state funding or cash spending authority. Through this process, CU Boulder has completed many of the projects listed in the previous 2011 master plan, including construction and remodeling of significant instructional, research, athletics and student residence space as well as a major utilities system project.

In collaboration with the Office of Budget & Fiscal Planning, the Division of Academic Affairs has developed a 10-year capital plan that is addressing (1) the renovation and abatement of Hellems Arts & Sciences, the Mary Rippon Theater, and the Ekeley teaching labs; (2) the structural stabilization of Old Main; and (3) the construction of a new chemistry and applied mathematics facility. In its FY 2022 Board of Regents strategic plan update, CU Boulder reported a general fund building deferred maintenance backlog of $699 million. Historically the campus has observed an average annual growth of

approximately 6% in the general fund deferred maintenance backlog. The 10-year capital plan sets a target of retiring approximately $400 million of deferred maintenance in the next 10years, which will help Academic Affairs better support academic units so it can meet the teaching and research needs and the creative work mission.

In concert with the Campus Master Plan and with input from colleges, departments, programs, and institutes, the Division of Infrastructure and Sustainability has recently undertaken a strategic laboratory infrastructure study to facilitate both a short-term and a long-term lab facilities plan. This planning will include identifying opportunities to more effectively utilize existing space resources through collaboration, as well as shifting facilities use intensities to better meet the needs of research and creative work across campus. When completed, this plan will complement the [Shared Instrumentation Network](#) administered by the Research and Innovation Office, which supports research through developing core facilities.

Technological infrastructure

CU Boulder's Office of Information Technology (OIT) partners with academic, research and administrative units to provide the university with core IT services and customer-focused IT support. Its security system analysts also provide guidance in implementing CU Boulder's program to provide information security for the university's communication and information systems. OIT maintains an [updated set of strategic goals and prioritie](#)s and updates the university on its work in [annual reports](#). In 2023, OIT instituted a new IT Governance Framework comprising various committees and groups that represent the academic and research interests of the campus and guide strategic IT direction. This structure ensures engagement and dialogue between key stakeholders in order to align campus IT strategies with overall institutional goals, facilitate effective decision-making through transparency, and ensure that investments in technology are optimized to maximize their impact on organizational objectives. In conjunction with IT Governance, OIT spearheads CU Boulder's newly formed [Data Governance](#) framework, a system for defining who within CU Boulder has the authority and control over data assets and how those data assets may be used.

OIT supports CU's educational programs through [a variety of services](#) for all modes of teaching, whether face-to-face or online. OIT also supports physical classroom and learning space technology. Information technology for educational programs is also provided and supported through the Office of the Registrar, which implements the student records system and integrates it with tools to help students plan their education, including a degree audit system (u.Achieve), a degree planner tool (u.Achieve Planner) and an advanced class search and registration tool.

Sustainability planning

CU Boulder is a leader in [climate, environmental, and sustainable energy research and education,](#) and the faculty's commitment to sustainability as an educational value has been recently affirmed in the learning objectives of the common curriculum (see 3.B.1. and 3.B.2.). This value is reflected in campus practice and action. [CU Boulder](#) had the first student-led campus recycling program in the country, the first student-led Environmental Center, and the first NCAA Division-I zero-waste athletics program and was the first institution to achieve [Gold status in the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS)](#) of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. To continue and strengthen this commitment, on Earth Day 2021, at the Campus Sustainability Summit, the chancellor issued a [call to climate action,](#) announcing a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. As responses

to that call, CU Boulder has established both a campus [sustainability council advisory group](#) comprising students, staff and faculty membership and the [Sustainability Executive Council](#), comprising staff, faculty and student leadership and charged with driving action and accountability to achieve carbon neutrality. To achieve that action, CU Boulder has created an updated [Climate Action Plan](#) (first crafted in 2009), a year-long project involving input from a wide array of campus and community constituents. The Sustainability Executive Council has already begun discussing and prioritizing the implementation of concrete actions that will help the university attain its Climate Action Plan's goals.

5.B.2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.

5.B.2. Planning and resource management at CU Boulder are guided by the university's statutory mission as the state's graduate and research institution, as well as by the chancellor's strategic imperatives: shape tomorrow's leaders, be the top university for innovation and positively impact humanity (1.A.1.). This mission and these imperatives explicitly guide all strategic planning efforts at CU Boulder. CU Boulder is furthermore committed not only to engage in planning but also to align current and future resources to those plans. The Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative (see 1.A.5.) is explicitly tasked with developing and prioritizing practices campuswide that maintain CU Boulder's fiscal soundness while also freeing up financial resources for strategic planning priorities. It is through these fiscally responsible planning efforts that CU Boulder will able to move forward on the recommendations of the Academic Futures strategic initiative, which is guiding academic priorities (see 1.A.2 and 1.A.3.); the IDEA Plan strategic initiative, which will guide plans for faculty, student and staff climate and inclusiveness (see 1.C.2. and 1.C.3.); and the Campus Master Plan, which will guide infrastructure projects (see 5.A.1.).

In addition, CU Boulder's longstanding planning processes ensure continuous attention to how resources should be aligned with the university's mission and priorities. The academic program review process (3.A.1. and 4.A.1.) ensures that academic units examine all facets of their programs and processes, and plan for the future in concert with units similar to themselves. The annual budget allocation process (5.B.3.) addresses the academic and nonacademic priorities developed through program review, as well as priorities developed on the campus and the college/school levels.

5.B.3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.

5.B.3. [CU Boulder's budget](#) is [developed in consultation](#) with shared governance and approved by the Board of Regents as described in 5.A.1., and this [process](#) follows a [consistent calendar.](#) The Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning (BFP) publishes the upcoming fiscal year's projected budget. The development and implementation of the new budget model (5.B.1.) ensures that budgeting is [transparent to all university](#) [constituent](#)s. The model clearly distinguishes how the flow of funding to academic units, derived from net tuition, is affected by mandatory campus costs such as utilities and insurance. The explanation of the model available to campus also illustrates the flow of funding from other sources of funding such as grants and auxiliaries.

Campus administration works directly with campus units to understand and evaluate existing budget levels and communicate thoughtfully about budget planning. In February 2024, CU Boulder

implemented the use of [Anaplan, a cloud-based software tool](#) to help facilitate annual resource planning processes. With this new budgeting tool, the university can:

- Help facilitate annual resource planning processes
- Integrate strategic planning into the budgeting exercise
- Reduce retroactive budget planning
- Eliminate the need for homegrown systems
- Draw together multiple sources of campus data to deliver more powerful reports, dashboards, and visualizations
- Provide new automation opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce manual processes.

Beyond the new budgeting tool, administration and campus units use various reports to monitor and evaluate financial health. Campus administration provides a [monthly set of reporting tools](#) enabling early detection of variances, deficits or any other financial details that may need attention, and the Campus Controller's Office provides financial management [guides](#) and [training](#). BFP annually creates a [Regent mandated variance report](#) on the total yearly budget as a check of how well CU Boulder is adhering to revenue and spending plans and as an alert to potential issues. In 2020-2022, the university also created [quarterly reports](#) describing the use of institutional portion funds distributed from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) act.

All new employees with fiscal roles must complete a financial training class presented by the Campus Controller's Office and the Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning (noted above). This class helps new employees understand the mechanics of the financial system, including how to perform budget journal entries. The entries are always approved by a different user to ensure separation of duties. Expenses are further monitored by internal and external audit as described in 2.A.2.

5.B.4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

5.B.4. Through its resource review and budget allocation processes, the Office of Budget and Fiscal Planning coordinates CU Boulder's budget cycle and model, stewards its financial assets and liabilities, and facilitates the allocation of resources necessary for CU Boulder to fulfill its mission and excel as a major educational and research university.

All operating revenues are earned and collected at the campus level, meaning that while CU Boulder is a part of the University of Colorado system, its revenue is not disbursed to that superordinate entity. The University of Colorado system office, comprising the Office of the President and numerous shared services such as treasury and procurement, allocates its costs of operation to CU Boulder and the other campuses via a cost allocation formula. Apart from this cost-sharing requirement, resource allocation at CU Boulder is independent and unencumbered. The new campus budget model (see 5.B.1.), specifically the Core Funds Allocation and Supplemental Fund, was designed to ensure that the campus's educational mission can be met.

CU Boulder's tuition rates are also explicitly connected to the educational mission. [Undergraduate tuition rates](#) are charged by [tiers that align to areas of study](#) and reflect differences in the cost of instruction.

CU Boulder's academic aims are explicitly tied to budgeting processes at the unit level through the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) review of each academic program and through ARMAC's use of ARPAC reports in its recommendations (see 3.A.1., 4.A.1. and 5.A.1.). In addition, in 2023 the Office of Academic Resource Management and the Office of Data & Analytics developed a course enrollment management insights tool to provide class-level historical and current enrollment data for all academic programs to inform course planning via an easy-to-use dashboard (see 5.A.2.). The tool was developed to assist colleges, schools and departments in examining enrollment patterns for individual courses (and course sections) to make future scheduling decisions easier and more data informed. This tool will help ensure that instructional resources are deployed to best meet the needs of CU Boulder academic programs and students.

5.C. The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

5.C.1. The institution allocates its resources in alignment with its mission and priorities, including, as applicable, its comprehensive research enterprise, associated institutes and affiliated centers.

5.C.1. In support of its mission as Colorado's comprehensive doctoral-granting public research university, CU Boulder has a vision to be a leader in addressing the humanitarian, social and technological challenges of the 21st century (see 1.A.1.). Through Academic Futures (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.) and related initiatives in recent years—and in alignment with the University of Colorado system strategic plan adopted in 2021—CU Boulder has made significant strides in advancing the pillars of discovery and impact, affordability and student success, diversity, inclusion, equity and access, and fiscal strength. The chancellor initiated the budget model redesign process at the end of 2020 precisely to align CU Boulder's resources with our mission and priorities.

Now that the new budget model has been implemented, the university in 2024 initiated the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative (see 1.A.5. and 5.B.2.) to accelerate transformative changes to how we operate as a campus as we begin to see a growing number of peer institutions facing structural deficits in their financial models. The initiative grounds the university in a uniform commitment to doing business in ways that:

- Recognize the shifting demographics already being reflected in student applications and creating an experience that better meets the needs of a more diverse student population.
- Make better use of campuswide technologies.
- Employ the university's workforce more strategically.
- Reduce duplicative and manual functions.
- End a culture of exceptions in processes and technologies that leads to some of that duplication.
- Adopt campuswide solutions that place primacy on serving vulnerable and minoritized populations.
- Establish a culture of multi-year planning that enables us to be proactive.
- Commits us to a new practice of financial resilience with budgets that mitigates unnecessary risk and that avoids across-the-board measures while using sound fiscal practices to ensure responsible stewardship of our resources.

In addition to the new budget model and the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative, CU Boulder's longstanding planning processes ensure continuous attention to how resources should be

aligned with the university's mission and priorities. The academic program review process (3.A.1. and 4.A.1.) ensures that academic units examine all facets of their programs and processes and plan for the future in concert with units similar to themselves. It also ensures that the Division of Academic Affairs remains accountable for the prioritization and implementation of the goals of the Academic Futures initiative (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.). The annual budget allocation process (5.B.3.) addresses the academic and nonacademic priorities developed through shared governance processes and campus leadership discussions.

5.C.2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.

5.C.2. Through its program review process, CU Boulder links assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting within the context of a regular evaluation of every academic program as well as every unit within Academic Affairs, including the Division of Student Affairs. We have emphasized the program review process throughout this Assurance Argument because of its robustness: the provost has empowered program review with making recommendations that lead to change. These changes include linking the allocation of resources to effective planning.

As discussed in 3.A.1. and 3.A.2., academic programs and the divisions within Academic Affairs are reviewed on a seven-year cycle by the provost's [Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC)](#), with annual follow-ups to review units' accomplishments and ongoing needs. The review process includes criteria for every unit's assessment of student learning (see 4.B.2.), its budget allocation process, and its resource needs in conjunction with its strategic plan and its support of CU Boulder's academic mission. The Division of Student Affairs, which houses many co-curricular programs, is also evaluated by ARPAC, thus bringing Student Affairs' [assessment of student success for co-curricular programs within the purview of program review](#). ARPAC's recommendations to units, deans and the provost frequently carry resource implications, and the fact that cognate units are reviewed together allows for strategic prioritization of resources to groups of units that share the same needs. Upon implementation of the Common Curriculum, which integrates academic and co-curricular activities under the umbrella of its learning objectives (see 3.B.1. and 3.B.2.), the ARPAC review will need to expand to include this facet of student learning.

As CU Boulder carries out its strategic planning in connection both with program review and with the Academic Futures strategic planning process (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.), it is taking the opportunity to review and reform or redirect funding and funding processes to support student learning and student success. In addition, the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative (see 1.A.5., 4.C.1. and 4.C.3.) is explicitly charged with linking planning and resource allocation with student learning and student success. As one example, after the Center for Teaching and Learning, formed in response to an Academic Futures recommendation, incorporated the Arts & Sciences Support of Education Through Technology (ASSETT) program (see 3.D.4.), the Office of Budget and Fiscal planning conducted an analysis of [ASSETT fees and budget structures](#) to better support ASSETT's stated mission and expend accumulated plant funds for that purpose.

5.C.3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.

5.C.3. CU Boulder's strategic initiatives encompass faculty, students, staff and, when applicable, external constituent groups. Town halls, listening sessions and invitations to submit white papers and feedback have garnered the participation of all these groups in, for example, the Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.2 and 1.A.3.), the IDEA Plan (1.C.2. and 1.C.3.), the Common Curriculum (3.B.1. and 3.B.2.) and the development of the new budget model (5.B.1.). Other campus efforts discussed in this assurance review, such as, for example, the [Unified Student Experience](#) project to create a new online/mobile student portal (Buff Portal), involve similar constituent involvement and participation. Campus leaders advised by external boards include, for example, deans of all the schools and colleges, the vice chancellor for research and innovation and many of the chairs and directors of departments, programs, centers and institutes—such as the [Department of Geological Sciences](#), the [College of Music](#) and the [Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies](#), to name just three disparate examples. Student boards advise many academic units as well as student support and auxiliary units, such as, for example, [Medical Services](#), the [University Memorial Center](#) and the [Recreation Center](#).

CU Boulder communicates with the University of Colorado's president and Board of Regents through the chancellor and the chancellor's two chief officers, the provost and the chief operating officer (COO). Together, the chancellor, the provost, the COO and the vice chancellors form the Chancellor's Cabinet, the campus's top decision-making body. The provost and the COO regularly meet with their own respective cabinets. To discuss initiatives and policies with a wide range of campus leadership, the Chancellor's Cabinet meets at least once a month with the University Executive Leadership Team, consisting of the provost's and the COO's direct reports, and monthly with the [Shared Governance Group](#) (see 5.A.1.). The provost meets monthly with the chairs and directors of academic units, and the COO meets monthly with the associate and assistant vice chancellors within the Strategic Resources Support organization.

The chancellor, COO and provost are advised by campuswide faculty, staff and student governance groups and by other advisory committees as described in 5.A.1. The [Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA),](#) the representative body of all CU Boulder faculty, informs and engages the faculty in issues of importance, and its guiding principle is that the faculty and the administration shall collaborate in decisions that affect the welfare of the University of Colorado and of CU Boulder in particular. Similar longstanding faculty governance groups on the Boulder campus serve the College of Arts and Sciences ([Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate](#)) and the College of Media, Communication and Information ([CMCI Faculty Council](#)). In 2018, the Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.2. and 1.A.3.) recommended that CU Boulder strengthen faculty governance by making sure that each school and college has a representative governance group body; the provost accepted that recommendation and in April 2019 directed that the schools and colleges lacking an appropriate faculty governance structure begin to design one. In response, the College of Engineering & Applied Science has launched its [Faculty Governance Council](#), and the other schools and colleges and the University Libraries have further codified faculty participation in their respective executive committees.

Faculty governance is also integral to decision-making at the provost's level of the administration. The provost is advised by faculty committees on budget ([Academic Resource Management Advisory Committee](#)), program review ([Academic Review and Planning Advising Committee](#)), reappointment, tenure and promotion of faculty ([Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee](#)), faculty salary equity ([Salary Equity Appeals Committee](#)), and faculty grievance ([Provost's Advisory Committee](#)). The vice provost for undergraduate education and the dean of the Graduate School are advised on policy and curriculum by their respective advisory committees. The vice chancellor for research and innovation is advised by the faculty [Research and Innovation Office Advisory Board](#).

As described in 5.A.1., students advise campus leadership on planning through the elected CU Student Government (CUSG), which represents students across CU Boulder with a focus on undergraduate students, and the elected Graduate and Professional Student Government(GPSG). In addition, student governance groups within several of the schools and colleges are advisory to the relevant dean: the University of Colorado Engineering Council for undergraduate engineering students, the Leeds Student Government for undergraduate students in the Leeds School of Business, the CMCI Student Government for students in the College of Media, Communication and Information and the Student Bar Association for students in the law school.

Other ways in which leadership engages internal constituencies in planning efforts include the chancellor's annual State of the Campus Address and regular open forums held by the provost in each school and college. CU Boulder maintains a faculty information web site that includes updates on administrative leadership's meetings and initiatives, including updates on ongoing and ad hoc CU Boulder committees. The campus news digest, CU Boulder Today, is distributed to the campus community in several editions. The undergraduate student edition and the graduate student edition, which focus on items of interest to students, and the faculty-staff edition, which contains more research, training and transactional information, come out three times a week during the academic year and on a limited schedule during breaks and holidays.

5.C.4. The institution plans on the basis of a sound understanding of its current capacity, including fluctuations in the institution's sources of revenue and enrollment.

5.C.5. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.

5.C.4. and 5.C.5. As described in 5.A.1. and 5.B.3., CU Boulder's short- and longer-term budget planning takes enrollment projections and levels of state support into account. When CU Boulder and the University of Colorado system recommend tuition rates to the Board of Regents, they similarly take into account regional and national economic conditions, student demographics, fluctuations in state support and Board of Regents directives. Each campus plans for contingencies based on likely final decisions on tuition. CU Boulder's chancellor, provost and COO, in partnership with the University of Colorado System office, maintain active relations with state government, including the Colorado General Assembly, the governor and the Colorado Department of Higher Education, to participate in the conversation about possible future changes to state support. To cushion the university against future economic downturns and possible declines in tuition revenue, the Board of Regents in 2018 directed each campus to build an Emergency Tuition Stabilization reserve equaling 4% of annual operating budget. This reserve proved essential during 2020, when enrollments dropped temporarily during the pandemic.

CU Boulder's budget model redesign (see 5.B.1.) was launched in 2020 in part to "enable the campus budget to respond to changes in revenue and enrollment." The Office of Enrollment Management predicts long-term enrollment trends based on Colorado, national and international student demographics, and social and geopolitical trends. The budget model redesign, the Strategic Enrollment Management Plan (see 1.A.4.) and the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative (see 1.A.5., 5.B.2. and 5.C.1.) all take into account the imminent "enrollment cliff" caused by a declining population of U.S. high school graduates. CU Boulder is also planning for a future in which students seek alternative

modes of earning high-quality credentials from a top research institution, including online and distance degrees, certificates and microcredentials (see 1.C.1. and 3.A.3.)

The Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative (see 1.A.5., 5.B.2. and 5.C.1.) also takes into account advances in technology that may change the roles of staff members. The role of the Office of Information Technology in anticipating and implementing new technological contributions to research, creative work and education is described in 5.B.1. Finally, the Campus Master Plan, Energy Plan and Transportation Plan and Climate Action Plan (see 5.B.1.) all take into account changes in climate and natural resources as well as the technological changes that may afford more fiscal and physical efficiencies and more sustainable practices.

5.C.6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

5.C.6. At the time of the 2019-2020 Assurance Review, CU Boulder reported on planning initiatives in progress having to do with academics, finances, infrastructure, the first-year experience, and diversity, equity and inclusion. Despite the challenges of a pandemic that required refocusing nearly every campus operation and much of the teaching, research and creative work enterprise, CU Boulder has been dedicated to implementing those plans, along with other university priorities such as climate action. As described throughout this assurance review, since 2020 CU Boulder has established new frameworks for implementing campus goals regarding student success (Buff Undergraduate Success; see 1.A.5., 4.C.1 and 4.C.3.), diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI Action Plans; see 1.C.2. and 1.C.3.), financial planning and resilience (the new budget model and the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative; see 1.A.5., 5.B.1., 5.B.2. and 5.C.1.), pedagogical excellence (the Center for Teaching and Learning; see 3.C.5.), online education (CU Boulder Online; see 3.A.3.), learning outcomes assessment (see 4.B.) and climate action (the Sustainability Executive Council; see 5.B.1.). Each of these implementation frameworks works with data-informed metrics to measure success—and, when necessary, to change course.

Other longstanding data-informed practices, also referred to elsewhere in this assurance review, help ensure that CU Boulder improves its operations to meet its goals:

(1) The University of Colorado Board of Regents assesses the performance of CU Boulder in the context of the University of Colorado system. The Board of Regents has set strategic metrics for each of the University of Colorado campuses in the areas of affordability and access, student success, financial sustainability, and reputation and impact, and receives reports annually on all four campuses' achievements and assessment in these areas.

(2) As the flagship of the University of Colorado with a unique statutory mission as a graduate research institution, CU Boulder has developed three strategic imperatives to further that mission (see 1.A.1.). In support of those strategic imperatives, and as detailed below, CU Boulder employs a robust array of longstanding performance measures by which it documents its effectiveness in teaching, research and creative work, and public impact and that it uses in regular evaluation processes designed to plan, benchmark and assess improvement.

Strategic Imperative 1 has to do with student success: *Recruit, retain and graduate students who are committed to the common good, to engaging diverse perspectives, to the productive use of*

critical thinking and creative problem-solving, and to the application of intellectual curiosity, rigor and collaboration to complex issues and opportunities.

- As detailed in 4.C., measures of undergraduate student completion and retention rates are used to monitor and assess CU Boulder's efforts to improve student success. These measures include detailed analysis of student demographics including, for example, gender, ethnicity, residency status and first-generation status as well as the results of student surveys.
- As detailed in 4.B., measures of student success are used to assess and improve the effectiveness of both academic programs and co-curricular programs.
- Student success is the focus and goal of targeted projects such as the Buff Portal created by the Unified Student Experience project, designed to give students seamless access to support services (see 3.D.1. and 4.C.3.).
- As discussed in 3.A.1. and 4.A.1., the ARPAC program review process is the primary method by which academic programs are assessed and improved. Undergraduate and graduate student success is one metric of program review (4.B.1.), and unit-level student satisfaction surveys are considered as a part of this program review process.
- As part of its Strategic Planning launched in AY 2019–20, the Graduate School is working with academic units to develop new campuswide metrics of graduate student success.

Strategic Imperative 2 has to do with innovation through collaboration: *Serve as the nexus for innovation by facilitating collaboration and the sharing of diverse perspectives between universities, industry, laboratories and communities.*

- The Research and Innovation Office (RIO) facilitates research partnerships with industry, laboratories and communities and encourages innovation through internal funding opportunities and leadership programs. RIO tracks results and identifies opportunities for increased engagement (see 1.B.1.).
- Faculty outreach activities are tracked via the Faculty Information System, whose public face is CU Experts, an online resource for identifying faculty expertise and accomplishments. Outreach activities are an assessment measure in the ARPAC program review and improvement process as described above. See 1.B.3. for more details about outreach.

Strategic Imperative 3 has to do with the production and impact of new knowledge and artistic works: *Broaden and expand research, scholarship and creative work and articulate the positive societal outcomes they advance.*

- The Faculty Information System and the Office of Contracts and Grants collection of data on sponsored research track faculty achievements and funding in research, scholarship and creative work.
- Faculty members whose responsibilities include research, scholarship and creative work (tenured and tenure-track faculty and research faculty) are assessed for contributions to research, scholarship and creative work in the annual merit review process and in reappointment reviews (for untenured faculty and research faculty), tenure and promotion reviews (for tenure-track or tenured faculty) and post-tenure reviews (for tenured faculty). Needed faculty improvement in research, scholarship and creative work is addressed at the unit level in the case of research faculty, department/unit and

college/school levels in the case of tenured faculty who undergo faculty post-tenure review, and also at the provost level in the case of tenured/tenure-track faculty who undergo reappointment, promotion and tenure reviews (see 3.C.3., 3.C.4. and 3.C.5.).

- CU Boulder holds a master license with Academic Analytics, a private firm providing data on faculty scholarly and research activity to PhD-granting universities in the U.S. and U.K. and uses those data as part of ARPAC program review as well as academic decision-making at the college/school and campus levels.

5. Summary.

CU Boulder supports its research, discovery, educational and outreach enterprise with sufficient resources that are shepherded through prudent and forward-looking fiscal, infrastructural, human resource and academic planning. The university makes decisions regarding planning and resource allocation through processes that are explicitly aligned with CU Boulder's mission and strategic imperatives and that involve faculty, staff, students and external constituents in advisory and shared-governance roles. In the Academic Futures strategic initiative, CU Boulder engaged the entire community of faculty, students and staff in planning the university's future. To make the Academic Futures plan and other university priorities come to pass, CU Boulder has implemented a new budget model and new data-informed structures (such as the Buff Undergraduate Success initiative and the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative) designed to marshal the university's resources most effectively to achieve these aims. CU Boulder has also set explicit goals in research and creative-work excellence, student success, and employee and student well-being to help the university make its planning and resource allocation decisions responsibly. To make those decisions collaboratively, CU Boulder has worked diligently to strengthen and engage shared governance for faculty, students and staff and to ensure that information and opinion flow freely between the university's leadership and the entire CU Boulder community as well as the residents of Colorado.