University of Colorado Boulder - CO

HLC ID 1038

OPEN PATHWAY: Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review   Review Date: 6/3/2024

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Context and Nature of Review

Review Date

6/3/2024

Review Type:

Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review

Scope of Review

- Assurance Review

There are no forms assigned.

Institutional Context

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is the flagship campus of the four-campus University of Colorado system. The institution offers 81 undergraduate and 155 graduate programs in a variety of disciplines. In fall 2023, CU Boulder enrolled over 37,000 students (about 20% more than the number of students in 2014) including about 6,400 graduate students. CU Boulder is an R1 reesearch institution with $684 million in research awards in 2022-23. It is also a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU). CU Boulder had 2,571 instructional faculty in fall 2023, an increase of 19% over the number in 2014. CU Boulder is undergoing a leadership change effective July 1, 2024 with a new chancellor replacing the previous chancellor who served the institution for a total of 50 years including the last 15 years as its chancellor.

This is the Open Pathway Year 4 Assurance Review with an embedded report on the implementation of two major academic components: 1) a shared program of general education and 2) a regular collection and use of student learning assessments to improve student learning. The interim monitoring report resulted from the Reaffirmation Review completed in 2019.

Interactions with Constituencies

Not applicable

Additional Documents

In addition to the Assurance Argument and the Evidence Files, the team reviewed webpages and minutes of meetings available on the institution's website. In response to specific questions from the review team, the ALO of the institution provided 16 additional documents which are in the Addendum section of the Assurance System.

1 - Mission

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

1.A - Core Component 1.A

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

1. The mission was developed through a process suited to the context of the institution.
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.
3. The mission and related statements identify the nature, scope and intended constituents of the higher education offerings and services the institution provides.
4. The institution's academic offerings, student support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its stated mission.
5. The institution clearly articulates its mission through public information, such as statements of purpose, vision, values, goals, plans or institutional priorities.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The mission of the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder), the flagship campus of the University of Colorado (CU) system of four campuses, has been established through the Colorado State Constitution and the Board of Regents Policy. The article of the State Statute and the Regent Policy have been last reviewed in 2022 and 2018, respectively. By Regent Policy, the mission of the CU system is 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 is to serve as the state of Colorado's comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards, offering a comprehensive array of undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programs. The mission, vision, and strategic priorities are made available to the public through CU Boulder's website.

CU Boulder engaged constituents across the campus in its Academic Futures strategic initiative to operationalize its mission in 2018. Five strategic priorities, as listed on the CU Boulder website, stemming from the Academic Futures recommendations are in the areas of (i) continue to lead in globallly recognized research, (ii) ensuring CU Boulder is a diverse, inclusive and welcoming place for all who live, work and study here, (iii) being centered on the belonging, well-being and success of

our undergraduate and graduate students., (iv) supporting the health and wellness of the university community, and (v) aligning our university's physical, digital and financial resources for future success. CU Boulder used the data-driven decisions and teamwork among faculty, staff, and administration during the COVID-19 pandemic to launch two major initiatives to support these priorities - the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) in fall 2021 and the Transformation and Financial Resilience effort beginning in spring 2024.

In support of its mission, CU Boulder offers 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. The variety of offerings support the educational and workforce needs of Colorado. The research-based graduate programs support CU Boulder's research enterprise which attracted $684 million in sponsored project awards in 2022-23 and help maintain CU Boulder's standing as a top-tier public research university.

In fall 2023, CU Boulder enrolled 37,153 students of whom 57% were residents of Colorado. The undergraduate enrollment was 30,707 indicating an increase of 24% over a ten-year period. The graduate enrollment has grown by 29% in the same period. In fall 2022, 27.6% of the undergraduate student body was made up of domestic racial and ethnic minorities. As noted in the Year 10 review in 2019 and as reflected in the fall 2022 enrollment data, the proportion of Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American students in the undergraduate population at CU Boulder is about half of their proportion in the State population. A new Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan is expected to be finalized in summer 2024. The SEM Plan is expected to enable 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. Progress in diversifying the student body through these efforts is important to advance the strategic priority with respect to diversity, equity and inclusivity.

Through its Division of Student Affairs, CU Boulder provides a wide array of student services in the areas of educational support, career preparation, and student well-being. Academic support services include peer tutoring, Student Academic Success Center, Writing Center, and Anderson Language & Technology Center.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.B - Core Component 1.B

The institution's mission demonstrates commitment to the public good.

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

As an institution statutorily authorized by the State of Colorado, CU Boulder is governed by a publicly elected Board of Regents. As such, CU Boulder has no obligations to any parent organization or to generate financial returns for a superordinate entity. The accountablility is clearly to the State of Colorado and its citizens.

The mission of CU Boulder emphasizes its responsibility to educate the next generation of citizens and leaders and to engage in research and creative work. The array of degree and certificate programs prepare students well for a variety of career paths in wide range of disciplinary areas thereby meeting the educational and workforce needs of Colorado. Through its Division of Continuing Education CU Boulder offers innovative lifelong learning opportunities through flexible programs for community learners as well as for working professionals. The Continuing Educaiton Auditors Program allows community members to audit a wide selection of courses. CU Science Discovery provides a platform for many STEM-focused activities for the K-12 audience in collaboration with school districts. CU Boulder offers free events and programs to the public through various departments and centers including 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. These and other examples provide ample evidence how CU Boulder extends it educational resources to serve the needs of the public.

The scholarship and research at the academic units and the 12 research institutes make CU Boulder a powerhouse in basic and applied research attracting over $684 million in research funding in FY 2022-23. CU Boulder has been successful in partnerships with industry (with some partnerships involving federal agencies also) on innovative basic and applied research.   The CUbit Quantum Initiative is an illustrative example in which the institution partners with the NIST Quantum Physics Division and Front Range companies to advance fundamental science and build a strong foundation for novel quantum technologies and their rapid dissemination, application and commercialization. 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. The University of Colorado system ranked fifth in the nation for launching startups in 2023, and fourteenth among US universities in translating innovation into impact in 2024 with CU Boulder being the major contributor to the efforts leading to these recognitions. Open access to research has been a key feature of the research enterprise at CU Boulder. The CU Scholar repository serves as a platform for preserving and providing perpetual public access to the research activities of members of the CU Boulder community.

CU Boulder engages with community at the local and state levels. 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. The Outreach Programs website lists 162 programs involving over 1,400 faculty and staff and over 6,000 students with activities spanning outreach education, service learning, volunteerism, and arts and cultural programs. Examples include programs at Mesa Verde Park, Sommers Observatory, Fisk Planatarium, and the Colorado Shakespeare Festival.

In 2023, CU Boulder created a new position at the associate vice chancellor level to liaise with the tribal communities across the state and collaborate on addressing issues. 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.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.C - Core Component 1.C

The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.

1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As noted in the Assurance Argument, students at CU Boulder are prepared to function as informed citizens in a multicultural democratic society through curricular and cocurricular activities. The Division of Student Affairs provides students resources to understand the rights and responsibilities associated with freedom of speech and academic freedom, 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. With over 80% student voter turnout, CU Boulder was recognized in 2022 as the ALL IN Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting for making intentional efforts to increase student voter participation.

CU Boulder reports each year to the Board of Regents on student enrollment in several courses on US and comparative government and student participatioin in civics-related educational activities. The enrollment and participation numbers have been steady over the past few years. The CU in DC program offers oppotunities for students to study and complete internships in Washington DC while earning university credits. One of the learning objectives of the Common Curriculum, which is planned to be implemented in fall 2026, is Preparing to Advance a Diverse Democracy.

The Guiding Principles of the Board of Regents state that the university will provide an outstanding, respectful, and responsive living, learning, teaching, and working environment, and will encourage and provide access to the university for all qualified students within the university's capacity. As a part of the CU system, these principles are acted upon by CU Boulder in many ways. The annual Diversity Report to the Board of Regents in 2022-23 outlined CU Boulder's DEI plan, *Inclusion, Diversity and Excellence in Academics (IDEA)*, under which strategies are being developed and implemented to advance five goals: employee skills and development, student achievement outcomes, community building, employee recruitment outcomes, and preparing students to participate in a diverse democracy. The senior vice chancellor for DEI (position created in 2021) provides strategic direction for campuswide DEI initiatives.

The shared leadership model developed by CU Boulder to address needs identified in a 2021 campus climate survey was used as a framework for academic and administrative unit leaders 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. The Action Plan Status dashboard in the DEI website shows the units engaged in developing action plans for the five goals in the IDEA plan. The status of most of the action plans is listed as "in progress". CU Boulder is encouraged to continue the implementation of the action plans and report on progress and impact in the various units.

CU Boulder has policies and procedures for complaints related to discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and violence, and misconduct. The institution subscribes to the equal opportunity/affirmative action principles. The policy framework along with educational and training programs for employees and students allows CU Boulder to maintain an environment supportive of the diverse members of its community.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

1.S - Criterion 1 - Summary

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

Rationale

CU Boulder's mission is clear and current. It is published on its website along with the vision and strategic priorities of the institution. The mission statement as well as the academic, research, and outreach programs demonstrate CU Boulder's commitment to the public good fulfilling the educational and workforce needs of the state. The institution is deeply engaged with its internal and external constituents in actualizing its vision and mission.

2 - Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

2.A - Core Component 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.

1. The institution develops and the governing board adopts the mission.
2. The institution operates with integrity in its financial, academic, human resources and auxiliary functions.

Rating

Met

Rationale

As a public institution of the State of Colorado, CU Boulder has a statutory mission adopted by the Colorado Legislature in 1963 defining the mission of the institution as that of 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). University of Colorado Board of Regents serves as the governing board of the institutions within the University of Colorado system including CU-Boulder. The Board established the current University of Colorado Strategic Plan in 2021 laying out the priorities and vision for the system including discovery and Research, Affordability and Student Success, Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Access, and Fiscal Strength. The plan identifies the strengths and growth objectives for each of the system institutions, establishing specific goals and metrics for each. Annual reports on the progress of each campus in reaching the goals outlined in the strategic plan are submitted to the Board of Regents.

The institutions ethical principles and standards of conduct are informed by multiple interties include the Colorado Constitution, state statutory requirements, Board of Regents laws and regulations and internal policies and practices. Article 8. Part B of the Law of the Regents establishes the responsibility of all system community members for understanding and upholding the 'highest standard of legal and ethical behavior." The policy further outlines standards for responsible conduct, respect for others, conflict of interest, research and academic integrity, stewardship of university property, contributing to a safe workplace, privacy and confidentiality, open and effective communication, and the reporting of suspected misconduct. Policy revision history notes that the policy has undergone regular review and revision with the last revision make in 2023. System and institutional policies and procedures further outline expectations, processes for reporting and remediating misconduct.

Institutional standards for ethical and responsible conduct are outlined through various publications

including those on student conduct, professional right and responsibilities of faculty and administrative leaders, and handbooks or conduct standards for classified and professional employees. The student body has established and continues to lead the implementation of a social responsibility code for all university community members known as the "Colorado Creed" as a "way of life reminder" of the expectations and standards for those within the university community.

The institution participates in state, system and institutions reporting mechanisms for reporting misconduct including the system ethics hotline and the CU-Boulder "Don't Ignore It" reporting system for reporting ethical concerns, possible discrimination and harassment, sexual assault and stalking, hazing, and other concerns. This system also provides alternative resources and reporting options including law enforcement and health and wellness support. Reports submitted in the assurance argument support that these system regularly receive, process, and track resolution of reported issues.

The Board of Regents retains the ultimate fiscal authority for the University of Colorado and its institutions. The Board Finance committee regularly reviews information provided by the institutions and others and makes recommendations to the full board for action. Finance committee meetings are open to the public and agendas are posted online.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.B - Core Component 2.B

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

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. 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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

CU-Boulder has processes and policies to support transparent and accurate representation of its offerings to the public. The Strategic Relations and Communications office provides resources to communicators across campus including a senior working group, annual conference and various training and support materials available on their website. Policies regarding various forms of communications and standards such as accessibility and privacy are posted on their website as well. The office of the registrar publishes the academic catalog annually and information about the academic programs, faculty and staff qualifications, costs, governance and accreditation relationships are available in the catalog as well as through multiple web interfaces designed to meet the needs of various constituencies.

The university communicates it impact and engagement research and community engagement through various avenues including annual reports to the University of Colorado Board of Regents, internal and external websites, new stories and other publications. The CU-Boulder Data and Analytics website provides information on academic and research outcomes including alumni earnings as well as results of various surveys of students, faculty, staff and community members. Data and information presented on the website for prospective students aligns with information posted in other publicly available locations such as the University of Colorado Systems University Information Systems and the University Data and Analytics website.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.C - Core Component 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.

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. The governing board's deliberations reflect priorities to preserve and enhance the institution.
3. The governing board reviews the reasonable and relevant interests of the institution's internal and external constituencies during its decision-making deliberations.
4. The governing board preserves its independence from undue influence on the part of donors, elected officials, ownership interests or other external parties.
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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The University of Colorado System Board of regents are a nine member publicly elected body representing each of the eight congressional districts in Colorado and one at large member. Members are elected for staggered six-year terms by each district. The Board's charge and structure are defined in the Colorado Constitution and the board is charged with the exclusive control and direction of all funds and appropriations of the system. This election process and the regulations in place are designed to preserve the independence of the Board as well as its singular focus on fulfilling the statutory missions of its system institutions. As elected representatives Board members are subject to state regulations regarding conflict of interest, ethical conduct and appropriate use of authority. In addition to state regulations, Regents policy further outline policy and procedures for addressing real or perceived conflicts of interest.

As a public system of the State of Colorado, the University of Colorado Board of Regents is governed by state sunshine and public reporting laws in addition to their own policies. Meetings of the Board and its committees must be published in advance, open to the public with limited exclusions, and the minutes posted in a public forum. Evidence provided in the assurance argument and posted on the system website indicate that meetings and agendas are posted in advance and that minutes and video recordings of full board meetings are posted and publicly available. Review of those minutes supports the assurance within the written argument that the Board regularly solicits and receives input and feedback from a wide variety of constituencies including students, staff, faculty, administrators, and community members through reports, presentations, and public comments.

Regent orientation documents are posted in the board records management system available to the public though not addressed in the assurance argument. The materials include meeting norms, mission statement, guiding principles, and the vision statement of the system. In addition to full

board meetings, board members each participate in committees with rotating and overlapping membership which support transparency and accountability within the board and between the board and the institutional leadership. Board members also participate in bi-annual retreats which based on a review of agendas provide in depth information exchange on specific emerging issues and trend in higher education.

By policy the Board delegates the day to day management of its institutions to the university administration to carry out the strategic plans and policies of the Board. The Chancellor of the university is the chief executive officer of the institution and is responsible to the system president for the academic, fiscal, and administrative operations of the institution.

Under the shared governance model outlined in the Laws of the Regents, faculty have the principle responsibility for decisions concerning "pedagogy, curriculum, research, scholarly or creative work, academic ethics, and recommendations on the selection and evaluation of faculty." Regents policy further dictates that the dean of a school or college is the principal academic and administrative officer of their school and is responsible for the enforcement of policy, budgetary planning and allocation of funds, faculty assignments and recommendations on the actions of the college or school. Evidence provided in other sections of the assurance argument support this assertion.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.D - Core Component 2.D

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

Rating

Met

Rationale

There are structural protections in place in regards to academic freedom and freedom of expression at CU-Boulder. The University of Colorado Board of Regents Law (Article 5.D) provides specific protections for academic freedom for faculty which are in alignment with the AAUP's Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure and Article 1.E states the commitment of the Regents to the principles of freedom of expression as outlines in the US and Colorado Constitutions. The institution provides ongoing guidance to various constituency groups regarding academic freedom and freedom of expression including clarifying guidance published as recently as 2023. In addition to faculty facing materials, materials are also provided for students and non-faculty staff members regarding freedom of expression and appropriate ways to differentiate between individual speech and statements made on behalf of the institutions. Beginning in 2020 the institution began a "sustained conversation" about the "responsibilities associated with the privileges of academic freedom." This resulted in an ongoing speaker series and the creation of various resources related to academic freedom including specific resources on scholar safety.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.E - Core Component 2.E

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

1. Institutions supporting basic and applied research maintain professional standards and provide oversight ensuring regulatory compliance, ethical behavior and fiscal accountability.
2. The institution provides effective support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff and students.
3. The institution provides students guidance in the ethics of research and use of information resources.
4. The institution enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Rating

Met

Rationale

In accordance with the expected policies of state public R1 institution, CU Boulder has extensive policies and procedures that direct the behavior of the university's constituencies in the responsible acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge. The institution has a variety of oversight mechanisms for research and ethics monitoring including the Office of Research Integrity, the Office of Contracts and Grants, and the Campus Controller's Office which support campus faculty, researchers, and students in ensuring compliance with the laws and policies of the state, the institution, the University of Colorado System, and federal agencies. Additionally, the Office of Research Administration retains a repository of polices and procedures and publishes them in a variety of formats and forums appropriate for various user groups.

Training in responsible research practices and ethical conduct for researchers is required for all staff and student paid research positions and is available to all campus constituencies. Training takes place a various levels in both general practices and practices and policies specific to certain types of research. The office of Contracts and Grants provides a very detailed matrix of responsibilities for administrative and research staff throughout the lifecycle of sponsored research. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety also provides comprehensive services for relevant research and the broader institutional community to ensure compliance and maintain safety standards. Suspected violations of research related conduct and practices can be reported through a variety of means and offices as described in 2A.

The institution has a published honor code to address student behaviors including academic integrity. Students receive instruction on institutional expectations related to academic honesty beginning in orientation prior to taking courses at CU Boulder. The institution maintains communication and reinforces academic honesty expectations through a variety of means throughout the students career including library instruction and resources, course syllabi, social media content, media articles and other student facing materials. Institutional policies are evaluated annually and materials submitted indicate that active actions are taken to clarify and extend academic honesty policy and guidance in

response to changes in student behavior and technology. The institution experienced a spike in reported honor code violations amid the COVID pandemic, which may have been influenced by several factors including increased use of technology to monitor academic integrity during remote learning and a rise in avenue's for unauthorized sharing course related materials in the marketplace. Materials submitted in the addendum indicate consistent enforcement of the honor code using a variety of means including escalated consequences for repeat offenses, adding educational and interventional tools, and increasing communication throughout the university consciences about institutional expectations as new technologies and practices evolved. The number of incidents has declined each year since its spike in 2020-2021.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

2.S - Criterion 2 - Summary

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Rationale

The University of Colorado, Boulder has policies and practices in place to assure that it meets or exceeds standards for ethical and responsible conduct throughout its operations. Governed by an intersecting sets of standards and policies from the State of Colorado, the University of Colorado System Board of Regents, the federal government and its own internal policies the institution communicates to its various constituencies through a variety of means including during the hiring and orientation process, through training and professional development opportunities, an through regular and consistent auditing as evidenced in the assurance report. The institution has published policies and statements of commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression for both employees and students. Individuals or groups with concerns about the ethical conduct of the university and its constituents have a variety of means for reporting those concerns including independent systems provided by the system and state as evidenced in the assurance argument and the addendum. .

3 - Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

3.A - Core Component 3.A

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

1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of student performance appropriate to the credential awarded.
2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.
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).

Rating

Met

Rationale

In its efforts to assure course and program currency, make sure that student performance is at an appropriate level, and guarantee that program quality is at an appropriate level, CU Boulder brings together many offices and the professional expertise and organizational skills of many of its people. Faculty members, staff and administrators across departments, schools and colleges play important roles in the formation of new degrees and programs. These individuals and their units play an important role in determining which courses and programs lead to a credential and what level of student performance is required.

At a different level, CU Boulder gives different assignments to personnel in the Office of the Registrar, which along with other units such as the Offices of Graduate and Undergraduate Education and Office of Academic Planning and Assessment work together to make sure that established policies, procedures and processes are appropriate for academic elements under consideration. CU Boulder has put in place many structures and pathways that assure that proposals for courses, certificates, minors, degrees, even academic units, and microcredentials are given thorough consideration by appropriate units and decisionmakers.

The University of Colorado System Strategic Plan now plays a critical role in shaping the current CU Boulder mission and academic agenda. The strategic planning process was collaborative, inclusive is now paying dividends in assuring that CU Boulder's programs and courses are current and require appropriate levels of performance by students commensurate to the degrees and certificates awarded. An important purpose was to identify common themes that would help guide the university for the next five years and beyond. Strategic pillars now advance the mission include Affordability &

Student Success, Discovery & Impact, Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Access, and Fiscal Strength. Student enrollment on the campus last fall was estimated to have been 37,153. The staffing, resources, infrastructure and support identified by CU Boulder gives positive evidence of the institution's ability to broad comprehensive graduate institution that capably manages numerous quality programs at all levels. Sources examined by the peer review team indicate that CU Boulder offers numerous academic programs – Bachelor's (81), Master's (91) and doctoral (64) as well as over 200 certificates, and professional degree programs.

CU Boulder made available to the peer review team nearly all of the requested materials including documentation about programs, people, and funding of its activities. The Assurance Review documentation included in the appropriate CU database describes critical processes utilized and discusses the submission and review of new and revised content to be considered for degree, certificates, other credentials and courses. A review of course and program materials utilized by various schools and colleges reveals documentation that consistently includes sketches about faculty and staff as well as their roles. In addition, the curriculum content is reviewed for relevance and appropriateness at the various levels: undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate and certificate programs.

The documentation provided and requested information sought by the Peer Review Team indicates that CU Boulder uses several mechanisms to ensure that courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree, certificate, or other credential awarded. As noted elsewhere in this document, many mechanisms, such as the processes for the creation and approval of new degree programs, the seven-year review cycle by the registrar, specialized accreditation of programs, and assemblage of external visiting committees and advisory boards assembled by the individual academic units, assure quality and appropriate demands upon the student to meet program requirements.

Faculty members play critical roles in the event new courses and degree programs are under consideration. New courses and degree programs are subjected to a detailed process that engages multiple levels of the academic enterprise. What content might come under the faculty's purview and which levels of the academic institution might be engaged? As noted in the CU Boulder self-study documentation; proposals for all new courses, certificates, minors, degrees, academic units and micro credentials are scrutinized. Faculty curriculum committee in each department, program or other unit come into play. Such submitted proposals, UC Boulder notes, beginning in 2021, passes through a curriculum management system administered by the Office of the Registrar. This process, with its approval processes and has been expanded to include a review and iterative revision of each proposal. The nature of the proposal, e.g., creation of a new academic unit, a new degree, etc. is likely to shift the proposal review to a thorough review that now engages the relevant college/school dean, vice provost for undergraduate or graduate education, the provost or chancellor.

There is guidance for pursuits such as described in the form of documentation. CU Boulder details documentation in the form of detailed curriculum and student learning goals, guidance provided by the University of Colorado Administrative Policy Statement (APS) 1038 and APS 1041, and the Board of Regents, given Regent Policy. Non-credit requires the establishment of learning goals and review by a university-wide Microcredentials Advisory Committee. Representatives from academic colleges should be included in the review and/or approval process.

CU Boulder informed the peer reviewers of the impact of the COVID pandemic after the HLC comprehensive review 2019. CU Boulder did engage faculty, staff, and administrators to develop an approach to address the need for different approach to the collection of data related to general

education and to address of other concerns discussed in the previous HLC review from a planning perspective. In 2023, the Provost launched a revision of the longstanding Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) process, and the two administrators who co-chair ARPAC were appointed to lead the revision. However, two important areas remain to be addressed: work in progress regarding general education and work on assessment. The letter dated July 10, 2023 and written by Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor describes the charge. Documents including the *Academic Program Review Redesign Summer* (October 2023) and the Center for Teaching and Learning documents entitled *Assessment in Course Design* and *Teaching & Learning in the Age of AI*. These elements provide evidence that the various documents indicate the planning of CU Boulder's different approach to assessment and learning goals. CU Boulder has shifted their approach to learning goals, data collection and assessment to a course level. The Academic Program Review Redesign document list several noteworthy goals including efficiency, reduction of time and workload requirements and the provision of better and more timely feedback.

Existing courses and degree programs have their own set of processes, procedures, as well as rules, policies and practices. The Office of the Registrar has a prominent role in its conduct of a seven-year process to identify whether courses have been offered during that period. Revisions of existing degree programs, courses, minors and certificates are reviewed in the same manner as new proposals with one important exception; the provost represents the final level of approval rather than the Board of Regents. The CU Boulder documentation brings to the peer review team's attention APS 1019, its requirement for scrutiny of existing academic programs, including degrees, certificates and minors. The Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) undertakes reviews of academic programs that may lead to a serious impact upon academic units under review.

The framework and processes needed to gather for assessment process and to make a determination of the quality of academic programs from the various academic units has been described. However, CU Boulder notes that as of the 2023-2024 academic year 93% of the undergraduate programs had completed creation and publication of learning outcomes. The units assigned must now give the graduate programs their full attention. The creation of a dashboard and conduct of graduate program assessment fits well with goals of the Graduate School's Strategic Plan. This denotes, however, a work in progress. Obviously, since the work on assessment and learning goals is now to be focused at the individual course level and considered for the modalities utilized, this new approach will require the gathering of data with a focus on a different level of analysis.

Specialized accreditation is available to many of the qualifying professional programs. Such programs include Education, Engineering, and Business, to cite just a few. It is noteworthy that certain of these programs have more than one accreditation agencies; Business is one example. A review of the CU Boulder documentation provided enabled to peer review team to identify several units that have earned special accreditation, which typically indicates a higher quality status or program.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.B - Core Component 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.

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

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

During the comprehensive visit of 2019-20, that peer review team had significant concerns about the lack of a coherent and consistent general education program at CU Boulder and they requested that an interim report be submitted. They recommended that work begin immediately to:

1. Identify a university philosophy or framework for the base of the CU Boulder general education curriculum.
2. Develop student learning outcomes for the general education/core curriculum.
3. Develop, adopt and implement a general education curriculum grounded on the chosen university framework to ensure all undergraduate students across all undergraduate degree programs achieve the stated core student learning outcomes.
4. Determine how general education will be evaluated and achievement of student learning outcomes assessed.

They further recommended that the monitoring report be submitted with the Year-4 review. Noted within their rationale were concerns about the variability of general education requirements among the various colleges (ranging from 18 to 45 credit hours), inconsistent learning objectives, and the difficulties the then-current general education program posed to students switching majors or transferring in from other institutions.

The current peer review team recognizes that CU Boulder has worked to respond to these concerns about their general education program, and its interim monitoring report provides clear evidence of

these efforts. Over the past four years the institution has made admirable progress toward the goals recommended by the 2019-20 comprehensive evaluation team, working with faculty and administrators across the university to identify a general education program suited to the mission of CU Boulder. As with the concerns raised about curricular assessment (Criterion 4B) they solidly met the first two of the recommended goals, having developed a university framework for their general education curriculum and having identified the student learning outcomes that define student success and enable its assessment. Achieving consensus on these elements is a noteworthy achievement for a university with the diverse array of undergraduate educational programs offered by CU Boulder. There are, however, some unaddressed concerns that the current review team believes should be met and documented before the next comprehensive evaluation in 2030.

First, a concern raised in the 2019-20 review was based on the then-current structure that relied on general education requirements that varied greatly among units, ranging from 18-45 credit hours underpinning a variety of learning goals and requirements. The establishment of consistency in institutional goals and outcomes is crucial, but since curricular mapping across units has not yet begun, it is not clear how, or whether, the ability for all students to attain and demonstrate of the overall objective (enabling students to understand how individual, societal, and environmental well-being and sustainability are intertwined and mutually dependent), the three habits of mind (discovery, reflection, and engagement) and the skills (information literacy, critical thinking, and communication) will be consistently assured and assessed regardless of college or program. The assumed practice (B.1.h) of a general education program consisting of at least 30 credit hours for bachelor's programs is feasible within this framework, but it has not yet been established. Moreover, although the argument indicated that most faculty believed their own discipline's undergraduate major fulfills these objectives and outcomes, it is not currently clear how (or whether) this framework adequately addresses the needs of students who change disciplines or majors, or those who transfer in from other institutions.

Second, the 2019-20 team recommended the determination of how general education and achievement of student learning outcomes will be assessed. The 4-Year assurance argument did not directly address this concern, and as noted in the review rationale for Criterion 4.B, the current team believes this must be addressed at the institutional level in advance of the anticipated deployment of this general education program in 2026.

Beyond the specifics of these concerns, it is clear that CU Boulder offers many opportunities for students to engage in endeavors appropriate to the best of undergraduate education. A clear focus on human and cultural diversity is apparent in several majors, minors and certificates, and in opportunities for education abroad. A program of CU LEAD (Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, and Diversity) Scholars coordinates efforts campus wide, while the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Education support students' success through the Writing Center, and the Undergraduate Enrichment Program. The Office of Undergraduate Education provides support and offers opportunities for students who may be focused narrowly on achieving academic success; or students who seek educational and professional opportunities within the U.S. or abroad. Faculty and students in partnership may contribute to new knowledge, engage in creative work or discover knowledge neither had known about. OUE supports Air Force, Army, and Navy Reserve Officer's Training Corps with lower-level leadership courses open to all students. This sampling of offices and programs contribute to students' enriched academic experience, bringing human and cultural diversity to the foreground of their undergraduate experience.

Moreover, as an R1 institution, CU Boulder is able to offer its students opportunities to engage in

research projects, either as part of a faculty-led team or through individual projects co-designed with a faculty mentor. A focused conference endowment enables undergraduate to present their research findings at national and international conferences. Publication of student endeavors is possible through student-produced journals, or even through co-authorship in professional journals. Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary knowledge is fostered within CU Boulder's 12 research institutes, while artistic endeavors are supported through the Colorado Shakespeare Festival and the CU New Opera Workshop.

Overall, undergraduate educational opportunities, both curricular and co-curricular, are numerous and varied, and surveys of graduate students indicate that a majority of graduate student respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with their experiences at CU Boulder.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

Essential work remains to be done to ensure that CU Boulder undergraduates are afforded robust and consistent opportunities to achieve the student learning outcomes recently identified as essential aims of the CU Boulder undergraduate experience in the Common Curriculum document.

The team recommends that an interim monitoring report be submitted to HLC no later than July 1, 2026 that establishes:

1. How the recently established general education framework ensures that all undergraduate students, regardless of degree program, will have comparable opportunities to achieve the stated core student learning outcomes, meeting at least the assumed equivalent to a minimum of 30 credit hours of distributed general education curriculum.
2. How this general education framework responds to the needs of transfer students and students who switch programs or colleges midway through their undergraduate journey.
3. An assessment framework for general education student learning outcomes at an institutional level that assures consistency both in assessment methods and target levels of attainment of outcomes across all majors and colleges.

3.C - Core Component 3.C

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

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.
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. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial offerings.
4. Instructors are evaluated regularly in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
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.
6. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

CU Boulder has clear plans and is taking specific actions in support of its stated commitment to make sure its faculty and staff "…reflects human diversity as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves." Examples are provided make clear the level of their commitment. The Critical Hiring Program commits 32 centrally funded faculty hires over a period of three years. Broad criteria, rather than narrow obvious factors, are utilized.

A big challenge to many institutions' efforts to bolster their staff and faculty is that of retention. This flagship university is committed to hire and retain faculty through the use of networking with regional and national groups. On campus, the Office of Faculty Affairs enlists the assistance of organizations and groups such as Faculty of Color and Friends, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. National organizations such as The PhD Project, Consortium for Graduate Study in Management, and Aspire provide further opportunities. Staff is highly sought after as well. CU Boulder has developed action plans, committed its resources, and recognized the need to support and appropriately fund instructional meaningful endeavors made by quality faculty and staff that the institution seeks to retain.

The peer review team noted the growth in tenured and tenure-track from 1,129 to 1,135 during the period of 2014 and 2023. Full-time teaching-track faculty (AKA Instructor-Track faculty increased

from 341 to 570 and lecturers (who hold part-time positions) increased as well from 665 to 776. Research faculty are not in full-time tenure track positions, however, those faculty increased from 1,951 to 2,080 during the period of 2013-2023. The latter group plays an important role in that they assist in student research supervision. The peer review team recognizes the importance of these individuals in their particular roles. It is important that the individuals hold appropriate credentials. The issue is highlighted in part by CU Boulder's use of a handful of faculty members whose highest level of academic credential is a Bachelor's degree. It is noted that a total of 15 tenure-track and teaching track faculty hold a bachelor's degree as their highest academic credential. Also, it is a bit surprising that three of the individuals are associated with the Business program where most business schools have instructors who possess lots of experience but hold an MBA or other relevant master's degree.

The staff at CU Boulder plays a very critical role given the size of the institution, complexity of the institution, and the large number of offices, centers, and support facilities available to assist students, faculty, staff, and visitors to the campus.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.D - Core Component 3.D

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

1. The institution provides student support services suited to the needs of its student populations.
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. The institution provides academic advising suited to its offerings and the needs of its students.
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).

Rating

Met

Rationale

CU Boulder expresses a strong commitment of support to their students. This commitment is evident on the basis of the number of organizations, staff, and other resources devoted to helping the students be successful in making the transition to becoming a student, to achieving success as a student, and to the extent possible, reaching their full potential. Listed below are a number of the support offices, centers, and support organizations established to assist them.

At CU Boulder major organizations devote themselves and their mission in support of their students. Primarily, students receive support services rendered by the Division of Student Affairs and Health and Wellness Services. CU Boulder provides tremendous amount and variety of support for its students regardless of whether they are undergraduates, graduates, or whether they are full or part time. The student is served regardless of major or enrollment type. The range of student needs extends from those of the body – food, clothing and shelter – to academic survival and growth needs. The campus has a large number organizations that have been created to serve staff and faculty but students is the student service agencies reason for being. At one end of the spectrum a student may need direction or guidance regarding a particular course or a kind of road map to navigate his/her academic journey. Today, a student may seek to gather food from the university's food pantry or an alternative to homelessness.

Students, staff, and faculty enter an environment that provides the tools for teaching and learning. CU Boulder has the necessary infrastructure and facilities needed where education occurs. Teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum. CU Boulder provides a well-stocked, well-staffed, and electronically based libraries. Health and wellness needs that range from counseling services, psychiatric services, mental health counseling, victim assistance, recovery support, as well as intramural sports and other activity. The Office of Disability Services, The Center for Inclusion and Social Change, as well as The Basic Needs Center a handful of the places a person can turn. Buff Portal is a rather special resource for students in the need of administrative services. Other services

help students make the transition to the academic environment. Academic advising is a critically important function. Various units such as the Registrar's Office works closely with academic units. From a transition in requiring assistance and adjustment to the transition out requiring an understanding of the role of academic and engagement in extramural activities, and the placement functions; a student relies upon the help of others at CU Boulder.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

3.S - Criterion 3 - Summary

The institution provides quality education, wherever and however its offerings are delivered.

Rationale

CU Boulder presents a flagship university that offers much to its faculty, staff, and students. CU Boulder has been classified as a Carnegie research intensive university since the first Carnegie rankings were published in 1973. The peer review team's review indicates there is an alignment between Chancellor's Strategic Imperatives, the current strategic initiatives, and CU Boulder's commitment of resources. It has a large number of resources including students, faculty, and staff that may assist the surrounding community, the state, nation, and beyond. The institution was visited during 2019-2020 term. During the period 2014 through 2023, CU Boulder has experienced growth among tenured and tenure-track faculty (TTT) from 1,129 to 1235 (9%); with full-time teaching-track (also known as instructor-track faculty) increasing from 341 to 570. Non-tenure track (not TTT) Research faculty numbers have also increased. The qualifications of the faculty and the compensation they receive are carefully monitored. It continues to be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admissions that offers a comprehensive array of undergraduate, masters, and doctoral degree programs.

CU Boulder has achieved many of the goals set for itself since its 2019 comprehensive visit, although much remains to be done in a few critical areas. In 2021, a process was initiated to decide what sort of Common Curriculum should be adopted. Those schools, colleges and programs offering undergraduate degrees as well as the Libraries and Boulder Faculty Assembly all played key roles in the process. After a final campus vote their proposed Common Curriculum has been adopted.

Considerable planning has gone into the launch of the Common Curriculum process, slated for the 2026-27 academic year. CU noted the setbacks caused by the pandemic and other challenges faced with regard to the implementation of a shared program of general education and a regular collection and use of student learning assessments to improve student learning. As institutional progress continues to identify critical details of the newly designed program for general education, a second monitoring report for Criterion 3B is recommended. This report, to be submitted no later than AY 2025-26 in advance of the deployment of the program, should respond to three as yet unanswered concerns:

- How does the recently established general education framework ensure that all undergraduate students at CU Boulder, regardless of degree program, will have comparable opportunities to achieve the stated core student learning outcomes, meeting at least the minimal assumed practice of 30 credit hours of general education;
- How does this general education framework respond to the needs of transfer students and students who switch programs or colleges midway through their undergraduate journey;
- How will consistency in opportunities to demonstrate levels of student learning outcome attainment be established and assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively at the institutional level.

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 - Core Component 4.A

The institution ensures the quality of its educational offerings.

1. The institution maintains a practice of regular program reviews and acts upon the findings.
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.
3. The institution has policies that ensure the quality of the credit it accepts in transfer.
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.
5. The institution maintains specialized accreditation for its programs as appropriate to its educational purposes.
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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

CU Boulder has maintained its practice of regular program reviews that include evaluation of degrees, minors, certificates, and courses, and examples of how this practice is used for program-level improvement were included in the Addendum. We note that in July 2023 the provost spearheaded an effort to streamline this process with the goal of boosting efficiency and enhancing goal-setting. Spearheaded by the academic review and planning advisory committee (ARPAC), with input from administration, former ARPAC members, and the Faculty Affairs Advisory Board, and in comparison with the practices of 12 other institutions. The new process will be implemented in 2025, and its impact will be of interest in the institution's next comprehensive evaluation.

The institution evaluates transfer credits in two stages: initial assessment by the Office of Admissions based on state practices, and final determination by individual colleges within the university. Criteria

for transferability include the minimum credit hours that must be completed at CU Boulder, residency requirements, limits on correspondence credits, and the temporal validity and relevance to the degree or major. Each college and school within the university follows specific procedures for analyzing transfer credits to be applied to their individual undergraduate programs, with examples provided from the College of Engineering and Applied Science and the College of Arts and Sciences. The report also provided a clear policy statement on awarding credit for prior learning that has recently been approved by the Faculty Assembly but remains under administrative review. The transferability of credits follows AACRAO criteria, and includes consideration of the accreditation status of the institution at which the coursework was completed. Upon request by the student, the institution may conduct a focused review of coursework completed at a school that is not accredited using appropriate AACRAO recommendations in the decision process.

The document identified two statewide transfer agreements in which it participates, one for general education curricula and another for guaranteed pathways from associates to bachelors for specific academic disciplines. Both are applied with appropriate attention to the requirements of the institution's degree programs and are regularly reviewed at the state level to meet designated standards and support student success.

Evidence was provided that the laws and policies of the Regents establish the dean of each college or school as the principal academic administrative officer responsible for curriculum planning, with the principles of shared governance establishing that faculty have principal responsibility for decisions concerning pedagogy and curriculum. Examples of partnership arrangements provided evidence that students in pathway programs leading to BS degrees in the College of Engineering and Applied Science must meet prerequisite standards of CU Boulder.

The institution documented its specialized accreditation in law, business, music, journalism, clinical psychology, speech-language pathology, audiology, and for its Museum of Natural History. The College of Engineering and Applied Science has a number of degree programs accredited by ABET, and it is seeking accreditation for four new programs, including partnership programs with Western Colorado University and Colorado Mesa University.

The university requests information on the success of its undergraduates through a Graduate Destinations Survey, oversight of which was recently moved to the Office of Data Analytics. The survey is administered 3 times each year, 6 months after the students' graduation semester. The response rate can be disaggregated by gender, degree level, race/ethnicity/international status, school and college, or major, and has an overall response rate (as of the May 2022 graduation) of about 20%. However, no examples were provided to indicate how, or whether the institution uses these data to improve success.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.B - Core Component 4.B

The institution engages in ongoing assessment of student learning as part of its commitment to the educational outcomes of its students.

1. The institution has effective processes for assessment of student learning and for achievement of learning goals in academic and cocurricular offerings.
2. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
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.

Rating

Met With Concerns

Rationale

CU Boulder is clearly making strides in its efforts to support and meaningfully employ assessment of the educational outcomes of its students. Resources, training opportunities, and assistance continue to be available to Student Affairs professionals, with liaisons in each department attending monthly meetings led by the Student Affairs Office of Planning, Assessment and Data Analytics to ensure management of their respective department's objectives and outcomes. Annual reporting of assessment plans and methods encourages efforts toward continuous improvement of students' experience with their programs, services and spaces. Assessment of course-level student learning outcomes is not discussed in detail in the current argument, but improvement of the students' classroom experience, measured by the Faculty Course Questionnaire, is supported by guidelines for faculty to make effective use of the questionnaires to improve their teaching. Additional evidence of the institutional efforts to improve assessment of student learning is provided in the resources made available to the instructional community as part of the Buff Undergraduate Success initiative and grant funds for the development of assessment tools and strategies.

While evidence of the effort to improve assessment is clear, the comprehensive evaluation conducted during AY 2019-2020 specifically noted concerns with the institution's processes of ongoing assessment of student learning, and requested interim monitoring of progress toward its improvement. In particular they recommended that a monitoring report be provided to demonstrate meaningful progress in conducting regular assessment of student learning at both the undergraduate and graduate program levels and in using that information to guide planning and to improve student learning. In particular, they recommended evidence of:

1. Ongoing efforts to build a campus culture of assessment driven by the faculty.
2. An organized structure to initiate, support and monitor the regular practice of assessment across CU Boulder curricular and co-curricular programs.
3. All undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs have published, measurable student learning outcomes available to students, staff, and faculty and have begun to implement assessment of these program learning outcomes.

4. Efforts to develop assessment of university, institutional undergraduate and graduate outcomes.

The interim report has been embedded in their Year 4 Assurance Review, with evidence provided for the first two of these recommendations.

In this review, evidence is provided that the institution has continued the efforts it had initiated around the time of the comprehensive review and has established a process for the development and regular assessment of student learning outcomes for undergraduate programs. This process involves a four-year cycle of planning and focused assessment, and is reported to be faculty-driven. The examples provided from the first cohort to complete this process demonstrate the identification of action plans to improve student learning and/or assessment methods. Noteworthy in the planning template developed for units just beginning the process of identifying program-level student learning outcomes are the examples provided, showing both strengths and room for improvement of other units' outcomes and proposed assessment methods, which could aid in the development of a campus culture of assessment through identification and use of peer exemplars.

However, the demonstration of meaningful progress falls short of the recommend goal. The first cohort has completed the established assessment process without 100% participation across programs. A table provided as evidence of the establishment of program-level student learning outcomes indicates that 68 of 73 (or a reported 93%) units offering undergraduate degrees (81 degrees in total, as cited in Criterion 1A) have created SLOs. A review of the 2024-25 catalog shows that 72 of the 81 degree programs now have published learning outcomes that are readily available to students, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders. This demonstrates that the meaningful progress identified in recommendation 3 above has not been met: indeed, over the four years since the comprehensive review, only 75% of the programs that did not identify student learning outcomes in the 2019-20 catalog now do so and the remaining 25% do not have published student learning outcomes in the catalog.

At the graduate program level, progress has been even slower with only 17% of the graduate programs having published student learning outcomes in the 2024-25 catalog. As this is just the initial step required to engage in meaningful assessment of student learning, this slow progress does not demonstrate the expected level of commitment to data-informed improvement of students' educational outcomes.

Lastly, in the absence of evidence in the Assurance Argument to demonstrate the development of a process to assess institutional learning outcomes such as those recently identified as the basis of the general education curriculum (Common Curriculum), the review team requested additional information about the vision/plan for assessment of general education at the institutional level. The institution's response (available in the Addendum section) stated that "because the learning goals and outcomes of [the] newly approved Common Curriculum are designed to be achieved through each individual student's major ... assessment of the Common Curriculum learning outcomes will be achieved through assessment of the college and school general education program learning outcomes, each degree program's learning outcomes, and the First-Year Experience learning outcomes." It remains unclear, then, whether a cohesive assessment of these outcomes across all colleges and programs, i.e., at the institution level, is planned at all.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

The comprehensive evaluation team of 2019-20 noted that CU Boulder had begun to plan for a more

sustained, cross-campus program of student learning assessment, and the current review team notes that CU Boulder has begun to act upon some of those plans as they have taken shape over the intervening four years. However, the reasonable expectation that in that time every program, both undergraduate and graduate, would have identified measurable student learning outcomes and published them has not been met, nor is it clear that any plan for a university-wide, cross-program assessment of institutional learning outcomes has been developed.

This team recommends the monitoring report to demonstrate achievement of the meaningful progress requested following the comprehensive evaluation, including:

1. Evidence that demonstrates that all undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs have published, measurable student learning outcomes available to students, staff, and faculty and that they have begun to implement assessment of these program learning outcomes.
2. An assessment plan for general education student learning outcomes at an institutional level that assures consistency both in assessment methods and target levels of attainment across all majors and colleges.

We recommend that the interim monitoring report be submitted to the Higher Learning Commission no later than July 1, 2026.

4.C - Core Component 4.C

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

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.
2. The institution collects and analyzes information on student retention, persistence and completion of its programs.
3. The institution uses information on student retention, persistence and completion of programs to make improvements as warranted by the data.
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.)

Rating

Met

Rationale

CU Boulder has established ambitious goals for retention and graduation rates, and regularly monitors progress toward those goals. The University of Colorado System 2021-2026 strategic plan, provided with the report, includes annual reports on the freshman retention rates that have shown an overall gradual increase on the Boulder campus to 89.1% for the fall 2022 cohort, with an FY 2026 goal of 95%. CU Boulder four-year and six-year graduation rates for first-time freshmen are reported annually, and currently stand at 57% and 75% respectively, with a respective FY 2026 goal of 62% and 80%.

The data can be disaggregated according to a variety metrics that enable the institution to analyze an array of factors that may influence student persistence and completion. This analysis is supported by new undergraduate student experience and campus culture surveys, together with the student tracking tool developed as their most recent Quality Initiative. Similar surveys are given to graduate students to monitor persistence, completion, campus culture, and student satisfaction.

Evidence that these data are used to promote student success are provided in three examples of efforts initiated since the last comprehensive evaluation: the Buff Undergraduate Success (BUS) initiative; an Early Alert Program piloted in the College of Arts and Sciences; and a math success effort begun last fall. The BUS initiative serves as the ongoing effort to use both quantitative and qualitative information to target areas of potential impact on student retention. This has already yielded encouraging results by fostering the Early Alert Program which saw an apparent improvement in retention and GPA among students who were identified through the program.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

4.S - Criterion 4 - Summary

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.

Rationale

CU Boulder continues to demonstrate its commitment to its students' educational outcomes through its processes of academic program review and planning, and policies and practices that ensure appropriate oversight by campus, college and school leadership. Responsibility for pedagogy and curriculum rests appropriately with the faculty, who have data-informed opportunities to improve teaching effectiveness in response to student outcomes and feedback, supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning in collaboration with the Office of Data & Analytics. The institution maintains specialized accreditation where appropriate, and has a thorough evaluative process to ensure the quality of the coursework it accepts for transfer credit. Moreover, CU Boulder regularly requests data from its alumni to establish the level of success of its graduates, though it is not clear whether these data are used to inform improvements to its programs.

CU Boulder has established impressive targets for its first year retention rates as well as for four- and six-year graduation rates, and it has made considerable progress toward those goals. Importantly, it has undertaken efforts to analyze data within these metrics, leading to initiatives to identify student characteristics that might reveal gaps among or between student populations, and establishing an early alert program to identify at-risk students.

While evidence of some meaningful and effective assessment can be found in this report, and support of assessment of the student experience evident in student affairs department, the interim monitoring report embedded in this review demonstrated that the work begun in the effort to improve student learning outcome assessment on campus leave much still to be done. Given that the lack of meaningful assessment practices was identified as a concern in the comprehensive review reports from both 2010 and 2020, the current team recommends that the demonstration of meaningful progress (identified in Core Component 4B) be completed before the comprehensive evaluation of 2030.

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 - Core Component 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.

1. Shared governance at the institution engages its internal constituencies—including its governing board, administration, faculty, staff and students—through planning, policies and procedures.
2. The institution's administration uses data to reach informed decisions in the best interests of the institution and its constituents.
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.

Rating

Met

Rationale

The University of Colorado (CU) System is governed by the Board of Regents which engages with three intercampus shared governance bodies, the CU Faculty Council, CU Staff Council, and the Intercampus Student Forum as well as various Regent-led subcommittees to engage its internal constituencies in the decision making process. While the Board sets policies and provides oversight, the day-to-day operations of CU Boulder are delegated to the campus leadership.

At CU Boulder, faculty participate in shared governance through the Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA) and its various committees. The CU Boulder Staff Council represents the shared governance interests of staff. Students participate in shared governance through the CU Student Government (CUSG) and Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG). The chancellor, the provost and chief operating officer meet monthly with the leaders of the above four groups to share ideas and concerns across all governance groups.

Evidence (policy and procedure, and meeting minutes) provided have demonstrated strong commitment to ensure efficient and effective decision-making across all operational areas. Subcommittees are engaged to support campus leadership, for example: 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; the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) advises the provost and the deans on planning and priorities for all academic units; 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.

CU Boulder has the approach and deployment process in place to streamline its budgetary process for the purpose of efficiently allocating available resources to best support its organizational structures. Each campus presents their initial budget proposal to the regents each February and present their final budget to the Board of Regents in June. It is evident regular meetings are held to engage internal constituencies and solicit their opinions in the planning process. Representatives from all shared 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.

The Office of Data & Analytics supports the university's data-informed decision making efforts in the areas of enrollment management, budget and fiscal planning, tuition revenue forecast and planning, facilities and administrative management, and program review and planning. The common data set is used by the ARPAC to inform its review of and recommendations for each academic department and program.

CU Boulder has developed three strategic imperatives and employs an array of performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness in teaching, research, creative work, and public impact. The enrollment data analysis, benchmarking and measuring of student completion and retention rates detailed analysis of student demographics including, for example, gender, ethnicity, residency status and first-generation status as well as the results of student surveys.

Both the campus policy and the Academic Affairs policy on policy proposal and adoption require consultation with all shared governance bodies before they are enacted or revised. Per Regent policy faculty 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. Faculty curriculum committee at each school/college reviews and approves new and revised courses and curricula. New degree programs and academic units, as well as degree program and academic unit discontinuance, must also be approved by the Board of Regents. Policies require consultation with faculty and student shared governance bodies before CU Boulder academic policy is enacted or revised. The Graduate School Executive Advisory Council, comprising faculty and graduate student representation, advises on academic policy related to graduate education. Faculty have the sole authority to levy academic sanctions (e.g., grade penalties) for academic dishonesty.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.B - Core Component 5.B

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

1. The institution has qualified and trained operational staff and infrastructure sufficient to support its operations wherever and however programs are delivered.
2. The goals incorporated into the mission and any related statements are realistic in light of the institution's organization, resources and opportunities.
3. The institution has a well-developed process in place for budgeting and for monitoring its finances.
4. The institution's fiscal allocations ensure that its educational purposes are achieved.

Rating

Met

Rationale

CU Boulder has the infrastructure to hire, train, evaluate and sustain qualified staff to support its operational needs. The headcount of university staff and classified staff rose 36% in the past decade. Over the ten year period between 2014 and 2023, instructional faculty numbers increased by about 20% matching the increase in the number of students enrolled. Staff recruiting process starts with a rigorous review of position descriptions to promote diversity and mitigate bias. Onboarding of new employees is conducted by the hiring manager, department HR liaison and HR. HR offers open enrollment employee courses and credentials to employees to address professional development needs and provides discounted tuition for the Master of Science in Organizational Leadership. Evaluations for staff occur annually in the areas of integrity/responsibility/ethics, inclusive excellence, innovation, collaboration and communication through the Cornerstone platform to streamline and regularize performance management. CU Boulder has adopted the Compensation Framework Initiative (CFI) to facilitate pay equity analysis and identify pay adjustment needs.

Strategic planning and resource management of each unit at CU Boulder are guided by and aligned with the university's statutory mission and the Chancellor's strategic imperatives. Evidence presented has demonstrated the commitment of the university leadership to prioritize the resource allocation while maintaining the campus wide fiscal soundness in the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative, Academic Futures strategic initiative, the IDEA Plan strategic initiative, the Campus Master Plan and items identified through the program review process. CU Boulder recently developed and implemented a new budget model that aims to integrate strategic planning into the budgeting exercise to ensure the transparency to all university constituents. Internal constituencies and shared governance are involved in the process with the administration. Automated reports and dashboards are used to monitor expenditure and to assess the efficiency of the budgeting process.

CU Boulder strived for the diversification and growth of revenue sources in the past decade. From FY 2014–15 to FY 2023–24, CU Boulder's funding sources had 69% increase in tuition and fees, 77% increase in state appropriations (still only 5% of the total revenue stream), 77% increase in research

contracts and grants and 61% increase in gifts. CU Boulder Advancement works with the University of Colorado (CU) Foundation to manage and invest the assets given by private donors and grantors and provide a budget to support each campus's advancement activities. Through the review of the financial report, CU Boulder's total revenue, operational costs, net asset and cash withholdings have demonstrated its fiscal soundness. Focused enrollment growth and development of the research enterprise have enabled CU Boulder 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 total Composite Financial Index (CFI) in FY2023 was above the zone for public institutions with the index being 2.31 excluding GASB and 1.15 including GASB.

Through the evidence presented, CU Boulder has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability as an educational value. 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.

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. In 2018, the Strategic Facilities Visioning initiative was launched to ensure that facilities continue to enhance student success and the campus mission while also improving the efficiency and resiliency of the infrastructure in place, it provided foundation for the 2021 Campus Master Plan.

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. IT and Data Governance frameworks ensure that the OIT strategic plan aligns with academic, research and administrative technology needs and data access to individuals is controlled and monitored to facilitate work in support of the mission while ensuring data security.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.C - Core Component 5.C

The institution engages in systematic and integrated planning and improvement.

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.
2. The institution links its processes for assessment of student learning, evaluation of operations, planning and budgeting.
3. The planning process encompasses the institution as a whole and considers the perspectives of internal and external constituent groups.
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. Institutional planning anticipates evolving external factors, such as technology advancements, demographic shifts, globalization, the economy and state support.
6. The institution implements its plans to systematically improve its operations and student outcomes.

Rating

Met

Rationale

One of the goals of the budget model redesign process was to align the resources with the mission and strategic priorites. The reserouce allocation process is sensitive to academic and research needs as well as to mission priorities such as affordability and student success, diversity, inclusion, equity and access. Within the units, the priorities were given to program enhancement needs identified through the academic program review process. The Transformation and Financial Resiliency initiative is aimed at reducing CU Boulder's vulnerability to future structural deficits by increasing efficiencies in administrative, technology, and support functions and reducing duplications. In transforming the way the university operates, CU Boulder aims to enhance its ability to keep resources aligned with mission and strategic priorities in the future.

CU Boulder encourages program reviews to include recommendations that lead to change. A few examples were provided that the reviews resulted in changes to curriculum, investment in instructional technology, and facilities. The guidelines for review of academic programs include a review of student learning assessment data. Co-curricular programs housed in the Division of Student Affairs, are also evaluated by the program review processes. As progress is made in assessment of student learning in general education and in graduate programs (see Criterion 4.B), CU Boulder will have the opportunity to fully link its student learning assessment processes with planning and budgeting.

CU Boulder has demonstrated that it has the shared governance structure in place to engage faculty, students, staff and external constituent groups in the planning, policy making and decision making process. In addition to formal input from governance bodies such as the Boulder Faculty Assembly and the Staff Council, the chancellor and other senior leaders seek input from various committees,

boards and from the campus community through town halls and listening sessions. Strategic planning, academic program review redesign, and budget model development are examples of processes that involved a wide swath of the campus community.

CU Boulder maintains a faculty information web site that includes updates on administrative leadership's meetings and initiatives. 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.

Students advise campus leadership on planning through the elected CU Student Government (CUSG) and the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG). Some student governance groups within different schools and colleges are advisory to the Deans.

CU Boulder's short- and longer-term budget planning takes into account when recommending tuition rates to the Board of Regents regional and national economic conditions, student demographics, fluctuations in state support and Board of Regents directives. The Office of Enrollment Management predicts long-term enrollment trends based on student demographics, social and geopolitical trends. The enrollment projections and levels of state support provide critical information to guide budgetary planning process, strategic priorities and various initiatives around the university. The new budget model redesign aimed to "enable the campus budget to respond to changes in revenue and enrollment."

Anticipated advances in technology and its impact on university operations are taken into account in the Transformation and Financial Resilency initiative. The Campus Master Plan, Energy Plan and Transportation Plan and Climate Action Plan all consider changes in climate and natural resources as well as the technological changes that may afford more fiscal and physical efficiencies and more sustainable practices.

Data-informed metrics are used widely through the campus to measure success in the area of academics, finances, infrastructure, the first-year experience, and diversity, equity and inclusion along with other university priorities such as climate action, new frameworks for implementing campus goals regarding student success, diversity, equity and inclusion, financial planning and resilience, pedagogical excellence from the Center for Teaching and Learning, online education, learning outcomes assessment and climate action.

Interim Monitoring (if applicable)

No Interim Monitoring Recommended.

5.S - Criterion 5 - Summary

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.

Rationale

CU Boulder's allocation of resources is aligned to its mission and priorities as demonstrated by university budgetary planning process and shared governance structure. There's an opportunity for schools and colleges to define Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) while aligning their respective strategic objectives cascaded from the university level mission and goals. CU Boulder current has the infrastructure and resources to support its research, discovery, operational, educational and outreach enterprise needs.

The university's leadership is committed to keep stakeholders well informed and engaged in the collaborative data-driven decision-making process. The new budgetary model aims to empower the goals set in research, creative-work excellence, student success, employee and student well-being. As the new budget model is matured, there is an opportunity to more effectively close the loop of the assessment cycle through direct budget linkages.

Review Dashboard

Number	Title	Rating
1	Mission	
1.A	Core Component 1.A	Met
1.B	Core Component 1.B	Met
1.C	Core Component 1.C	Met
1.S	Criterion 1 - Summary	
2	Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct	
2.A	Core Component 2.A	Met
2.B	Core Component 2.B	Met
2.C	Core Component 2.C	Met
2.D	Core Component 2.D	Met
2.E	Core Component 2.E	Met
2.S	Criterion 2 - Summary	
3	Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support	
3.A	Core Component 3.A	Met
3.B	Core Component 3.B	Met With Concerns
3.C	Core Component 3.C	Met
3.D	Core Component 3.D	Met
3.S	Criterion 3 - Summary	
4	Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement	
4.A	Core Component 4.A	Met
4.B	Core Component 4.B	Met With Concerns
4.C	Core Component 4.C	Met
4.S	Criterion 4 - Summary	
5	Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning	
5.A	Core Component 5.A	Met
5.B	Core Component 5.B	Met
5.C	Core Component 5.C	Met
5.S	Criterion 5 - Summary	

Review Summary

Interim Report(s) Required

Due Date
7/1/2026

Report Focus
The team recommends that an interim monitoring report be submitted to HLC no later than July 1, 2026 that addresses the concerns in Core Components 3.B and 4.B. The report should include the following:

1. Evidence that the recently established general education framework ensures that all undergraduate students, regardless of degree program, will have comparable opportunities to achieve the stated core student learning outcomes, meeting at least the assumed equivalent to a minimum of 30 credit hours of distributed general education curriculum.
2. How this general education framework responds to the needs of transfer students and students who switch programs or colleges midway through their undergraduate journey.
3. An assessment framework and plan for general education student learning outcomes at an institutional level that assures consistency both in assessment methods and target levels of attainment of outcomes across all majors and colleges.
4. Evidence that demonstrates that all undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs have published, measurable student learning outcomes available to students, staff, and faculty and that they have begun to implement assessment of these program learning outcomes.

Conclusion

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) fulfills its mission commendably through educational programs, research and scholarship, and engagement. Over the past ten years, enrollment has grown by about 20% to over 37,000 and research awards exceeded $650 million in 2022-23. Recognized for the emphasis on sustainability in its educational and research programs, CU Boulder offers a supportive and vibrant interdisciplinary learning environment for all students. The attention given in its strategic priorities and action plans to make its programs accessible and affordable and to ensure student success is a strong evidence of CU Boulder's commitment to its educational mission. CU Boulder is a forward-thinking institution as evidenced in the launching of the Transformation and Financial Resilience initiative in 2024 with a goal to streamline its operations to continue to fulfill its mission in the future.

The current Assurance Review included two embedded reports on general education and assessment of student learning. Evidence provided to the review team showed that while CU Boulder has made some progress on these items, the current status of general education and assessment of student learning outcomes in all programs results in a rating of Met with Concerns on Criteria 3.B and 4.B.

Overall Recommendations

Criteria For Accreditation

Met With Concerns

Sanctions Recommendation

No Sanction

Pathways Recommendation

Not Applicable to This Review

INTERNAL

Institutional Status and Requirements (ISR) Worksheet

Review Details

Institution: University of Colorado Boulder, Colorado

Type of Review: Open Pathway - Assurance Review

Description: A report to be embedded in the Year 4 Assurance Review, on the implementation of two major academic components: 1) a shared program of general education and 2) a regular collection and use of student learning assessments to improve student learning.

Review Dates: 06/03/2024 -

☐ No Change in Institutional Status and Requirements

Accreditation Status

Status: Accredited

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Degrees Awarded: Bachelors, Doctoral, Masters

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Reaffirmation of Accreditation:

Year of Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2019 - 2020
Year of Next Reaffirmation of Accreditation: 2029 - 2030

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Accreditation Stipulations

General:

The institution is approved at the following program level(s): Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral

The institution is not approved at the following program level(s): Associate's, Specialist

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Additional Locations:

Prior HLC approval required.

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Distance and Correspondence Courses and Programs:

Approved for distance education courses and programs. Approved for correspondence education courses and programs.

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Competency-Based Education:

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Pell-Eligible Prison Education Program:

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Accreditation Events

Pathway for Reaffirmation of Accreditation: Open Pathway

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Upcoming Reviews:

Comprehensive Evaluation Visit - 2029 - 2030

Quality Initiative Proposal - 06/01/2027

Quality Initiative Proposal

Quality Initiative Report - 06/01/2029

Quality Initiative Report

Federal Compliance Review - 2029 - 2030

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Upcoming Branch Campus or Additional Location Reviews:

No Upcoming Reviews

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Monitoring

Upcoming Monitoring Reviews:

No Upcoming Reviews

  No Change
✓ Recommended Change:

Area of focus: 3.B., A report on General Education; and 4.B., Assessment of Student Learning

Date due: 7/1/2026

Institutional Data

Academic Programs Offered:

Undergraduate Programs		
Associate Degrees:	0	✓ No Change ☐ Recommended Change:

Baccalaureate Degrees:	81	✓ No Change ☐ Recommended Change:
Graduate Programs		
Master's Degrees:	97	✓ No Change ☐ Recommended Change:
Specialist Degrees:	0	✓ No Change ☐ Recommended Change:
Doctoral Degrees:	61	✓ No Change ☐ Recommended Change:
Certificate Programs		
Certificates:	297	✓ No Change ☐ Recommended Change:

Contractual Arrangements:

No Contractual Arrangements

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Off-Campus Activities

Branch Campuses:

No Branch Campuses

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change:

Additional Locations:

No Additional Locations

✓ No Change
☐ Recommended Change: