

Shaping the **New Flagship**

ACCREDITATION BRIEFING DOCUMENT

In Advance of the Site Team Visit by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)

JANUARY 2010

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Frequently Asked Questions about Accreditation

Who accredits the University of Colorado at Boulder?

Since 1913, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) has accredited the university. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the NCA is one of six regional accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. Regional agencies provide accreditation at the institution-wide level.

What is accreditation and why is it important?

The HLC/NCA evaluates the university in terms of its mission and the agency's standards or criteria. It assesses formal educational activities, governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student services, institutional resources, student learning, institutional effectiveness, and relationships with internal and external constituencies. The university's status as fully accredited allows students to receive federal financial aid and facilitates transfer of credit to other institutions. Accreditation is ongoing, renewed every 10 years.

What is the purpose of the self-study report?

The self-study report is intended to assist the HLC/NCA Site Team visiting the Boulder campus in February 2010. It summarizes the findings of CU-Boulder's self-study evaluation process and is organized according to the criteria established by the HLC/NCA. The self-study report also poses questions about the university's future.

How does the self-study report interface with the *Flagship 2030* strategic plan?

The self-study report describes much of what CU-Boulder learned about itself and its potential during the conception and evolution of *Flagship 2030*. A campus planning board and 70-plus-member steering committee for re-accreditation prepared the self-study report. The planning board members include:

Phil DiStefano, *Chancellor, Co-chair of the CU-Boulder Steering Committee*

Ric Porreca, *Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer,*

Co-chair of the CU-Boulder Steering Committee

Mary Jo White, *Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Project Coordinator*

Lou McClelland, *Director of Institutional Analysis*

Pauline Hale, *Consultant/Writer*

What is a Site Team?

Every 10 years, a team of external colleagues from other accredited universities around the country visits the university campus to evaluate the institution as a whole and provide recommendations for continued improvement. The university views this process as a unique opportunity for focused introspection about its strengths and challenges—and a chance to gain thoughtful feedback from this team of consultant-evaluators from the HLC/NCA.

When is CU-Boulder’s Site Team visit taking place?

The Site Team is scheduled to visit the Boulder campus February 22–24, 2010 and will spend time meeting with university leadership, faculty, staff, and students, among others.

What information will the Site Team members be seeking?

The Site Team will be gathering perspectives on many aspects of the university from students, staff, faculty, and leadership, and they will likely ask questions about individuals’ experiences at the university, as well as questions relevant to individual roles, responsibilities, and expertise. The Site Team will also help advance the university by providing advice and advocacy relevant to its future challenges.

How can the Site Team best advise the university?

The university will look to the HLC/NCA Site Team for guidance on many of the same challenges faced by peer institutions, including issues such as helping constituencies understand and value the quality of the faculty and programs at CU-Boulder, sustaining that quality with limited state funding, and identifying and recruiting the appropriate advocates for achieving the institution’s vision and potential as a comprehensive public research university. The university will also seek guidance on specific initiatives such as expanding international student enrollment and student/scholar exchanges, enhancing the student learning experience through efforts like the residential colleges initiative, supporting new research collaborations, increasing graduate student enrollment, and achieving greater operating flexibility and funding streams to help support the institution’s *Flagship 2030* strategic vision.

Where can I get more information?

The CU-Boulder accreditation website at www.colorado.edu/accreditation has further details, including links to:

- The Self-Study Report (PDF download)
- The Chancellor’s Message
- The Reaccreditation Process (including a list of steering committee members, a timeline, and a list of the HLC/NCA Site Team)
- Resources (including handbook of accreditation categories, institutional snapshot data, self-study chapter endnote references, and A to Z listings)
- HLC Affiliation
- The 2000 Self-Study Report and Site Team visit report

HLC/NCA Accreditation Criteria

CRITERION 1:

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

CRITERION 2:

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

CRITERION 3:

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

CRITERION 4:

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

CRITERION 5:

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

HLC/NCA Site Team

**Dr. Nancy Ellen Talburt
(Team Co-Chair)**

Vice Provost for Academic Affairs
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

**Dr. Mark S. Wrighton
(Team Co-Chair)**

Chancellor
Washington University in St. Louis

Dr. David C. Bosserman

Vice President of Administration &
Finance
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Peggy F. Harrel

Director of Graduate Studies and
Sponsored Research
University of Southern Indiana

Dr. Lon Kaufman

Vice Provost for Planning and Programs
University of Illinois at Chicago

Dr. Elaine M. Klein

Assistant Dean & Director, Academic
Planning, Program Review and
Assessment
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Natalie Krawitz

Vice President for Finance and
Administration
University of Missouri

Dr. Thomas L. McPhail

Professor of Media Studies
University of Missouri – St. Louis

Dr. Kenneth J. Moore

Professor Agronomy
Iowa State University

Dr. Morteza A. Rahimi

Vice President, Information Technology
Northwestern University

Dr. Rex D. Ramsier

Associate Provost, Policies, Procedures,
Reviews; Professor, Physics and
Chemistry
University of Akron

Dr. W. Randy Smith

Vice Provost for Academic Programs
Ohio State University

Dr. Ben A van der Pluijm

Professor and Senior Counselor to the
Provost
University of Michigan

Dr. George E. Walker

Vice President of Research and Graduate
Studies
Cleveland State University

Self-Study/Accreditation Timeline

September 2006

University of Colorado at Boulder begins phase one of a comprehensive strategic planning process, called *Flagship 2030: Serving Colorado, Engaged in the World*.

November 2007

Flagship 2030 is approved by the University of Colorado Board of Regents and adopted by the Boulder campus.

December 2007

Chancellor appoints Co-chairs and Coordinator for the Self Study and re-accreditation process and notifies NCA of preferred dates for the site visit.

June 2008

Chancellor appoints Self Study Planning Board. Board outlines a plan for preparing the self-study report, develops a draft table of contents, and submits it to the NCA staff liaison.

June–August 2008

Work begins on drafting the self-study report and assembling the evidence. Subject-matter experts are identified and engaged in gathering information and data analysis.

January 2009

Chancellor appoints the UCB Steering Committee for Reaccreditation. Steering Committee meets on January 21. First draft of the self-study report is shared with the Steering Committee.

January–June 2009

Members of the Steering Committee critique multiple drafts of the self-study report. Evidence is evaluated and refined. Resource materials are identified for the virtual resource room.

June–August 2009

Content of the self-study is finalized with an “as of” date of August 1, 2009. Design and layout begins. HLC/NCA Site Team composition is finalized.

September 2009

Accreditation website is launched. Final draft of the self-study report is posted for campus community. Chancellor hosts a “Leadership Retreat” for members of the Steering Committee.

November 2009

Final self-study report is printed and posted to the website. Self-study report is distributed to the HLC, Site Team, and campus community. University community is invited to send comments to the HLC/NCA.

February 2010

HLC/NCA Site Team conducts the campus visit on February 22-24, 2010.

March 2010

HLC/NCA Site Team chairperson sends an official draft of the final report to CU-Boulder for an “Error of Fact” review.

April 2010

HLC sends final report to CU-Boulder.

Self-Study Summary

Click here to view the entire self-study report in PDF format, or visit www.colorado.edu/accreditation for more information.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The report begins with an introductory chapter (Chapter 1) that offers a brief summary of the university's history, a current "snapshot" of the university, and a description of major developments since the last re-accreditation site visit a decade ago.

Chapter 2. 2000 North Central Association Review: Progress Report

Chapter 2 provides a report on progress made by the university in responding to suggestions and concerns expressed by the 2000 visiting Site Team. The HLC/NCA suggestions and concerns include the following:

Suggestions from the HLC/NCA 2000 Report

Reorganize Administration

The HLC/NCA Site Team suggested realignment of senior-level administrative duties and responsibilities and consideration of the addition of two positions.

Since the 2000 visit, CU-Boulder has restructured its administration in alignment with the visiting team's suggestions. The administration has been reorganized to allow more effective working relationships, to enhance the abilities of university leadership to accomplish its goals, and to nurture greater collaboration at all levels of the university. The following positions were established or enhanced:

- Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement
- Chief Information Officer

Improve Student Advising and Auditing System

The Site Team urged the university to develop a plan and provide resources for accurate and reliable degree audit programs as well as enhancements to the student information system.

The university has made significant improvements to its academic advising and degree audit systems since the last visit of the HLC/NCA Site Team, including the creation of the Academic Advising Center (AAC) in the College of Arts and Sciences, the new Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS), and enhancements to the student information system through the Integrated Student Information System (ISIS) project currently in progress.

De-couple Capital Campaign for Boulder Campus from System-wide Campaign

The Site Team recommended that CU-Boulder’s capital campaign be separated from the system-wide campaign.

While CU-Boulder capital campaigns remain part of system-wide campaigns, fundraising goals and planning are campus-oriented. Priorities for private fundraising are set by the school and college deans, the provost, and the chancellor. The vice president for development for CU-Boulder works with fundraising colleagues across campus and in the CU Foundation to formulate strategic and tactical plans for executing fundraising goals for the campus priorities. The vice president, who serves as a member of the Chancellor’s Cabinet, maintains close working relationships with the deans and development directors for each school, college, or other primary unit.

Concerns and Recommendations from the HLC/NCA 2000 Report

Enhance Diversity Planning

The Site Team noted that CU-Boulder needed to address diversity issues related to responsibility, diversity in leadership positions, the role of the equity and diversity office, mentoring, retention of minority undergraduates, and community climate.

The University of Colorado at Boulder embraces diversity as a core value that is critical to the achievement of excellence and inclusion within the campus and community climates. Leadership for the university’s diversity efforts is provided by the vice chancellor for diversity, equity, and community engagement. The vice chancellor participates on the Chancellor’s Cabinet and other senior leadership teams, providing her perspectives on budgetary, academic, and administrative matters.

Strategic planning and deliberate actions are necessary to achieve and support a diverse campus community, and CU-Boulder engages in both. Since 1999, CU-Boulder’s diversity strategies have been guided by a comprehensive diversity plan, called Blueprint for Action, which serves as an umbrella for unit diversity plans across the divisions and faculty diversity action plans across the colleges, schools, institutes, and centers. Through the years, the university has monitored progress on reaching its diversity goals and continues to update the plan, which has been recognized as a national model. The College Board included Blueprint for Action in its materials on developing a lawful yet ambitious diversity and inclusion plan. Moreover, the initial process for developing the institutional diversity plan, which included a campus-wide approach, is touted as an example of creating a climate of diversity and inclusion.

Mitigate the Effects of Restrictions on State Funding to Retain and Energize Top Faculty

The Site Team suggested that the campus continue to be vigilant and employ skillful management to maintain an adequate financial base and resources for faculty retention.

In the past 10 years, the university has worked hard to address constraints on the resources needed to remain competitive with its peer institutions. In particular, CU-Boulder has targeted funds for more competitive faculty salaries and salary increases according to merit. Between 1999 and 2008, faculty salaries over all ranks moved from five percent under the Association of American Universities (AAU) public peer average to even with that average. The university is committed to continuing its efforts to improve faculty retention and provide more competitive compensation.

Over the past decade, CU system leadership joined with other stakeholders in education, business, and government to build more public support for higher education. Effective communication with legislators and other public policy leaders was enhanced through the addition of a new position in state relations. In addition, CU-Boulder has developed a broad array of strategies for diversifying its resource base, drawing on private fundraising, increases in resident tuition rates, and greater incentives for internal entrepreneurial activities.

Relationships with state leaders have been enhanced with better communication and support for higher education as an economic and cultural engine for Colorado. In addition, the university has continued to strengthen its partnerships with federal agencies and laboratories, bringing additional resources into the institution.

The university has also enhanced its communication strategies by reorganizing and re-energizing its strategic communications department. Emphasis is placed on the mutual benefits of engagement between the university and its constituencies in the community and state, as well as the economic impact of a major research university such as CU-Boulder.

Nevertheless, maintaining state funding and an adequate financial base has remained a continuing concern both before and during the national financial downturn of 2008–09.

Expand Physical Plant; Improve City/University Relations

The team recommended continued attention to and discussion about a number of physical growth and development issues with the local Boulder community.

Since the last HLC/NCA evaluation, a number of new buildings and renovation projects have been completed, as described in Chapter 1. With help from a student capital construction fee and generous donors, the university was able to build new facilities for the Alliance for Technology, Learning, and Society (ATLAS) Institute; the law school; and the Leeds School of Business, as well as the Visual Arts Complex which opened in January 2010. Other new construction includes the Center for Community (set to open in 2010), the Institute for Behavioral Science (IBS) building (opening in 2010), the Eaton Humanities Building (opened in 2000), and the College of Engineering and Applied Science's Discovery Learning Center (opened in 2002). The University Memorial Center was significantly expanded in 2002.

Also in 2002, the university purchased a corporate building near the East Campus, which added more than 90,000 gross square feet to the campus. Now named the Center for Innovation and Creativity, the building houses some activities of atmospheric and oceanic science, music, biochemistry, architecture and planning, psychology, engineering, business, and student affairs. In 2003–04, Bear Creek Apartments opened at the intersection of Baseline Road and 30th Street. The two buildings accommodate about 500 students each with fully furnished units, common areas, and a recreation center.

Considerable progress also has been made in improving university relationships with the local Boulder community in the past decade. CU-Boulder has engaged in community meetings on such growth issues as expansion of the Bear Creek student housing project and the construction of the IBS building. In particular, development of the 10-year campus master plan has presented opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. In March 2009, CU-Boulder administrators presented a briefing for the Boulder City Council on *Flagship 2030* and the campus master plan processes, which was favorably received. Discussion covered such topics as how the city and university could work together to integrate the campus plan with the Boulder Comprehensive Plan. Improving the city–university relationship is a high priority for Frank Bruno, vice chancellor for administration, who served as the Boulder City Manager before joining CU-Boulder in 2008.

Assessment

The team recommended that CU-Boulder “institutionalize assessment” to “benefit the university,” with assessment serving as a tool for “institutional improvement” and improvement in “undergraduate and graduate student learning.”

The 2000 HLC/NCA evaluating team asked that the university prepare a three-year progress report on assessment initiatives to serve as a stimulant and summary of its efforts. Early efforts were described in the 2003 “Report of the Assessment Oversight Committee” and submitted to the NCA Higher Learning Commission as the progress report. They focused on formation of the Assessment Oversight Committee (AOC) in 2001, chaired by the associate vice chancellor for undergraduate education.

Since 2003, assessment activity and improvements in courses, general education, degree programs, and co-curricular activities—for undergraduates and graduate-level students alike—have indeed benefited the university in myriad ways. These activities are wide-ranging, including:

- General education—*College of Arts and Sciences core curriculum review; redesign of programs for writing and quantitative reasoning*
- Undergraduate education as a whole—*College of Arts and Sciences’ Colorado Challenge, Science Education Initiative, and other programs; assessments and learning improvements by other schools and colleges; cocurricular programs such as the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), study abroad, and service learning*
- Graduate-level students—*New degree programs; concurrent bachelor’s-master’s degrees*
- Learning environments and teaching—*Clickers, CULearn, Engineering’s Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory (ITLL), Faculty Teaching Excellence Program (FTEP), and more*
- Student surveys—*National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), senior surveys, survey of graduate-level students, and more*
- Programs, faculty, and scholarly activity—*Review and extensive revision of academic review procedures and cycle; other reviews of scholarly activity*
- Accountability—*Performance contract with the State of Colorado, VSA College Portrait, upcoming standardized testing*
- Organization—*AOC, Graduate School*

Chapter 3. *Flagship 2030: Serving Colorado, Engaged in the World*

Beginning in 2006, the university community came together to create a new plan—one that set a new course for the state’s leading flagship university over the next quarter-century. The plan is *Flagship 2030: Serving Colorado, Engaged in the World*. The name was chosen to reflect the university’s role and far-reaching vision. It expresses CU-Boulder’s commitment to the people of Colorado—and it proposes a global presence that is within reach even before 2030. The process that resulted in *Flagship 2030* formed the foundation for the current HLC/NCA re-accreditation self-study. For the self-study, the university was able to build upon the analysis and self-examination activities that shaped the strategic plan through three phases of development. Most importantly, the work of the original steering committee in Phase 1 and the *Flagship 2030* implementation task forces in Phase 2 provided core support for this self-study. Their work made it possible to meld the two processes, as well as other efforts, into a continuum of planning aimed at improving the University of Colorado at Boulder and setting a new course for the future.

Mission and Vision

While remaining true to its statutory mission of serving as “a comprehensive graduate research university,” the university has developed a vision statement that reflects the spirit and intent of *Flagship 2030*:

“The University of Colorado at Boulder will become a leading model of the ‘new flagship’ of the 21st century—by redefining learning and discovery in a global context and setting new standards in education, research, scholarship, and creative work that will benefit Colorado and the world.”

The Core Initiatives

We recognize the University of Colorado at Boulder’s need to invest in core service areas to remain competitive in the short term, and we have identified a set of priorities for these immediate investments.

- 1. Enhancing Education and Scholarship.** Increase the size and enhance the quality of our faculty by adding 300 new tenure-track faculty in the next 10 years; create a new model for undergraduate education to better prepare CU-Boulder students for a changing world.
- 2. Fostering Research Excellence.** Support our research mission by increasing institutional funding and research expenditures by 5 percent each year; provide targeted investments in cutting-edge research and creative work.
- 3. Enhancing Graduate Education.** Increase the graduate student population from the current 15 percent of total enrollment to 20 percent.
- 4. Ensuring Access.** Double merit- and need-based financial aid within five years; initiate a statewide dialogue on expanding access to Colorado higher education.
- 5. Supporting the Mission.** Increase the university’s staff to support education, research and creative work, service, and operations.
- 6. Investing in the Tools for Success.** Increase investments in new technologies, new and existing campus facilities, and library collections.
- 7. Learning for a Diverse World.** Implement new strategies for improving diversity; foster a supportive and inclusive climate for all.

8. Serving Colorado, the Community, and Our Graduates. Expand outreach programming aimed at Colorado communities; enhance opportunities for lifelong and distance learning.

The Flagship Initiatives

Beyond simply staying competitive, CU-Boulder has even higher aspirations for the next quarter-century. By investing in 10 transformational Flagship Initiatives described below, the university intends to become a leading model of future flagship institutions.

1. Residential Colleges. Build on our successful Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) by creating a new campus-wide emphasis on “residential colleges,” offering a multi-year residential academic experience for every entering student.

2. Customized Learning. Launch the “Colorado Undergraduate Academy” as an ongoing incubator for innovative learning methods and customized learning experiences.

3. Experiential Learning. Incorporate experiential learning programs more broadly in every student’s education.

4. Colorado’s Research Diamond. Initiate a “Colorado research diamond” as a collaborative enterprise among regional universities, businesses, government, and federal laboratories.

5. Transcending Traditional Academic Boundaries. Build upon our excellent record in interdisciplinary research and creative work to become a global leader in ventures that span traditional academic fields.

6. Building a Global Crossroads. Establish a “Colorado Center for Global Education, Research, and Advanced Studies” that will bring the world’s best thinkers to visit, work, and study at CU-Boulder. Expand student and faculty exchanges around the world.

7. Creating University Villages. Develop a new mixed-use “university villages” concept in collaboration with community leadership to guide build-out of major university properties.

8. Alternative Degree Tracks. Expand the options for earning University of Colorado at Boulder degrees.

9. Year-round Learning. Examine changing the university’s academic calendar to a three-semester, year-round schedule to expand learning and research opportunities and make better use of our resources.

10. Making Enterprise Work. Seek greater operating flexibility and expanded resources through a new relationship with the state of Colorado that will emphasize our public mission and our accountability under a more self-reliant and market-driven model. Enhance private fundraising efforts in support of university initiatives.

Flagship 2030: Next Steps in a Challenging Economy

In 2008–09, the national and worldwide economic downturn raised many concerns about *Flagship 2030*’s feasibility and the financial future of the university. Such concerns are understandable. However, the strategic plan’s long planning horizon allows the university to weather temporary fiscal storms while implementing the plan on a flexible schedule. The university clearly is not immune from economic volatility, but prior steps were taken to ensure the financial health and well-being of the university during the economic crisis, such as heightened attention to efficiencies, support for financial aid, review of hiring decisions, postponement of major equipment purchases, and reevaluation of capital construction plans.

Despite the financial challenges, the university has begun implementing 13 of the 18 initiatives in *Flagship 2030*. The feasibility of the remaining initiatives—customized learning, experiential learning, alternative degree tracks, university villages, and year-round learning—will be examined further by the university’s leadership team in concert with faculty, staff, and students. Chancellor DiStefano has identified all eight of the Core Initiatives as high priorities for implementation in the near term:

- Enhancing education and scholarship, including the reduction of the ratio of students to tenure-track faculty
- Fostering research excellence with continued commitment to key research initiatives and building projects
- Enhancing graduate education, including increasing graduate enrollment to 20 percent of total enrollment
- Ensuring access, including pursuing tuition flexibility and increased need-based financial aid
- Supporting the mission, including funding at least a small number of new staff in critical areas
- Investing in the tools for success, such as libraries, the new Visual Arts Complex, and the Center for Community
- Learning for a diverse world, with an emphasis on enrolling greater numbers of underrepresented students
- Serving Colorado, the community, and graduates, including enhanced faculty outreach to Colorado communities

Among the 10 transformational Flagship Initiatives, Chancellor DiStefano identified five as areas of focus over the three years from 2009 through 2012. They include:

- “Residential colleges,” including expanding the living and learning experience for freshmen and sophomores
- Creating a Colorado “research diamond,” focusing first on forming a conceptual framework for multi-institution partnerships
- Building a global crossroads, including expanding enrollment of international students and faculty exchanges
- Transcending traditional academic boundaries, building upon an excellent record of interdisciplinary research and creative work
- Making enterprise work, seeking greater operating flexibility and expanded resources

Flagship 2030 allows room for flexibility and stresses agility. The plan is not viewed as an exhaustive list of everything the university will strive to accomplish over the next quarter-century, but it serves as an overarching model for the new flagship university CU-Boulder intends to become. Strategies will be refined and amended over time as circumstances evolve. Depending on available resources, priorities will be set for phasing in the plan’s initiatives. In the end, however, the university is determined to achieve the core objectives of *Flagship 2030*: to excel in the performance of its role and mission, to support the people of Colorado, and to engage with the global community.

Chapter 4. Mission and Integrity

CRITERION 1:

The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Introduction

The goals and aspirations of the University of Colorado at Boulder are grounded firmly on the institution's mission and core values, as demonstrated by its plans, decision-making, and actions. Indeed, all planning derives from an understanding of the university's vision for meeting its mission with integrity in a diverse world of rapid social change. As a comprehensive research university, CU-Boulder strives for excellence in teaching, research, creative works, and service, guided by effective leadership and shared governance. The university works also to build a campus community characterized by respect for others and commitment to diversity. This chapter provides an overview of the university's actions and decision-making that demonstrates an alignment with its mission, commitment to integrity and values, promotion of collaborative leadership, and a vision for inclusive excellence.

Chapter Outline

Mission and Vision: From Territorial Days to a New Millennium

Core Component 1A. *The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.*

Core Component 1C. *Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.*

Meeting the Mission with Integrity

Core Component 1E. *The organization upholds and protects its integrity.*

- Academic freedom
- Commitment to equity
- Student conduct
- Campus safety
- Addressing grievances
- Transparency and public disclosure
- Academic honesty
- Compliance with local, state, and federal regulations
- Internal and external audits
- University Fiscal Code of Ethics
- Intercollegiate athletics

Leadership and Collaboration

Core Component 1D. *The organization’s governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.*

- Campus administrative structure
- Chancellor’s Cabinet
- Chancellor’s Executive Committee
- Shared governance
- CU Board of Regents
- University system administration
- Colorado Commission on Higher Education
- General Assembly of Colorado

Campus Diversity: Vision for Inclusive Excellence

Core Component 1B. *In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other relevant constituencies, and the greater society it serves.*

Creating a New Model

Planning for Inclusive Excellence

- Blueprint for Action diversity plan
- Diversity Summit
- Chancellor’s Diversity Advisory Board
- Accountability and assessment

Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity

Summary

The mission of the University of Colorado at Boulder, as spelled out in the statutes of Colorado, is to serve as a comprehensive research university. That clear and concise mission is communicated through words, actions, and decisions throughout the institution. Integrity is a guiding principle for meeting the university’s mission, demonstrated through the application of policies and procedures that underscore the values of honesty, fairness, and respect. University leadership is characterized by strong administrative structures and a commitment to collaboration and shared governance. A core value of the university is inclusive excellence, aimed at achieving a diverse and welcoming community of learning. The importance of diversity is underscored through numerous programs and initiatives, as well as through the *Flagship 2030* strategic plan.

Key Strengths

Mission-driven planning. *Flagship 2030* supports and extends CU-Boulder’s statutory mission as a comprehensive research and teaching university. Under the strategic plan, the university remains focused on service to the state of Colorado, while broadening its reach to encompass the nation and the world. The strategic plans of the schools, colleges, and administrative units support the vision and goals of *Flagship 2030*.

Integrity as a core value. Policies and procedures support the institution’s core values, including its commitment to integrity. The university remains dedicated to the fundamental concepts of academic freedom, equity, respectful treatment, and transparency.

Organizational stability. The current leadership team at CU-Boulder is characterized by extensive experience in higher education. Leaders such as Chancellor Phil DiStefano and Ric Porreca, senior vice chancellor and chief financial officer, bring a wealth of experience (nearly 60 years between them) at the University of Colorado. The deans and members of the Chancellor’s Cabinet offer a remarkable depth and breadth of experience in their respective areas of expertise. CU-Boulder is served well by an active system of shared governance, involving faculty, staff, and students in institutional planning and decision-making.

Shared governance. While CU-Boulder enjoys an experienced leadership team, the university’s institutional culture transcends individual executive leaders through an effective system of shared governance. The system actively involves faculty, staff, and students in institutional planning and decision-making on an ongoing basis.

Challenges and Issues

Setting priorities and sustaining focus. As a comprehensive research university, CU-Boulder’s mission is broad and inclusive. However, the realities of limited resources and a strained economy require a new emphasis on targeted programs that focus on the university’s highest priorities. The effects of the 2008–09 recession will mean making difficult choices and decisions within the framework of *Flagship 2030* and, while the strategic plan has created a new sense of direction, sustaining that focus over its long planning horizon will require ongoing attention and flexibility.

Creating a more diverse and welcoming community. The university has developed a strong vision of inclusive excellence that aims to provide a diverse and supportive environment for all. CU-Boulder has made strides in realizing that vision, but much remains to be done. More progress is needed in creating a multicultural and welcoming academic community. Changing attitudes is a slow and continuous process that requires constant attention and commitment.

Flagship 2030: Next Steps

Setting the course with *Flagship 2030*. The university’s strategic plan was developed with the input of many constituencies, including faculty, staff, and students. Regardless of fiscal ups and downs, *Flagship 2030* continues as the guiding force for planning, decision-making, and actions. Recent investments made by the university remain consistent with the priorities set within the plan. CU-Boulder’s leadership is committed to promoting *Flagship 2030* and implementing its initiatives as resources allow.

Aiming for inclusive excellence. *Flagship 2030* calls for more ambitious strategies for cultivating a multicultural and inclusive environment—and those plans are under way. The Blueprint for Action diversity plan is being refined and updated to identify new initiatives for becoming a more welcoming and diverse community.

Chapter 5. Preparing for the Future

CRITERION 2:

The organization's allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Introduction

Flagship 2030 lays out a long-term course of action aimed at creating a new model for the 21st-century research university, as described in Chapter 3 and throughout the self-study. The strategic plan's quarter-century planning horizon requires close attention to current and anticipated trends, as shown in the work of planning subcommittees and task forces throughout the university. Particular attention is paid to the identification and prudent use of resources in support of the plan's goals, along with seeking efficiencies within university operations. In addition, assessment plays a major role in the planning cycle, allowing the university to evaluate progress toward reaching its goals and to improve continuously the quality of learning and discovery at CU-Boulder. This chapter provides an overview of the university's multi-tiered planning efforts, resource management, and assessment activities—demonstrating how the three are interconnected through *Flagship 2030*.

Chapter Outline

Flagship 2030: Building on a Continuum of Planning

Core Component 2A. *The organization realistically prepares for a future shaped by multiple societal and economic trends.*

Core Component 2D. *All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.*

Leading the Planning Effort

Listening to Stakeholders

- Involving constituencies
- Involving advisory groups
- Surveying constituencies

The NCA Self-Study as Planning Tool

Strategic Planning by Academic Units

Planning Efforts by Administrative Units

Capital Campaign Planning

Campus Facilities Master Plan

- Changes affecting facilities planning
- New focus for facilities planning
- Internal and external input
- Setting new standards

Creating a Green Campus

Planning for Advances in Information Technology

Transforming the Student Information System

Managing Resources, Creating Capacity

Core Component 2B. *The organization's resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.*

Managing with Limited Resources

- Current financial profile
- Managing in a national recession

Efficiency and Agility

- Streamlining administrative functions
- Eliminating, reducing, or outsourcing services
- Efficiencies and cost containment
- Transformative partnerships
- Strategic enrollment management
- Tuition planning
- Financial aid
- Entrepreneurial approach

Focus on the Mission

Attention to Students

Participatory Budget Process

Investment in People

- Merit allocation process
- Merit evaluation factors
- Faculty Report of Professional Activities
- Equity review
- Classified staff performance pay program
- Graduate student compensation.
- Professional development

Assessing Progress Toward University Goals

Core Component 2C. *The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.*

Academic Review and Planning

- Restructuring academic review
- Enhancing unit assessments and accountability
- Crossing departmental lines

Institutional Analysis and Accountability

- Analyzing data for decision-making
- Sharing institutional data

Assessment Oversight

- Working with campus units

Summary

Planning for CU-Boulder's future begins with listening to stakeholders and valuing their perspectives. The ideas and concerns of constituents have played a significant role in the development of the university's strategic plan, as well as many other individual plans at all levels of the institution. *Flagship 2030* serves as the pivotal point of a broad continuum of planning activities ranging from the re-accreditation self-study, to diversity planning, to facilities planning, to capital campaign planning. Even before the most recent economic

difficulties began in 2008, the university had learned how to “do more with less.” Despite scarce resources, CU-Boulder has managed to thrive over the decades—due in part to a climate emphasizing efficiency, agility, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Mission-driven planning and the cultivation of transformative partnerships have allowed targeted investments in student learning, research, and creative work. The results of such investment and innovation are described throughout this self-study. Nevertheless, many in the university community are concerned about its ability to maintain momentum in the face of economic uncertainty at all levels of society.

The depth and breadth of assessment and evaluation activities at CU-Boulder indicate a strong commitment to improving the university and enhancing student learning. That commitment is underscored by a wide range of initiatives ranging from revamped academic review processes, to the sharing of extensive assessment measures, to more coordinated assessment oversight. The clearest evidence of effective assessment can be seen in the outcomes of these activities, which are described throughout the self-study, particularly in Chapters 2, 5, and 6. Examples include revised curricula, program eliminations, a redesigned writing program, expansion of innovative teaching methodologies, new graduate degree programs, new faculty in needed areas, and new capstone courses, among many others. In summary, assessment at CU-Boulder is pervasive—and it results in positive change. Further enhancements are expected as the university implements the initiatives and recommendations in the *Flagship 2030* strategic plan.

Discussion

Key Strengths

Alignment of strategic planning. Strategic thinking and planning are hallmarks of the University of Colorado at Boulder, whether at the campuswide or unit level. Emphasis is placed on aligning such planning activities with the university’s *Flagship 2030* strategic plan in support of more cohesive decision-making throughout the institution. These planning efforts are informed by the input of constituencies, both inside and outside the university.

Remarkable achievement with limited resources. CU-Boulder has been able to excel in many areas due to skillful, innovative management of scarce resources, although the situation is becoming precarious. Efficient practices and collaborative efforts have allowed the university to invest in core academic programs, people, and facilities. Student support for tuition increases under the Quality for Colorado strategic plan allowed improvements in specific academic programs, and the 2004 student capital construction fee helped fund several academic buildings.

Challenges And Issues

Sustaining excellence. Heavy tuition dependence, especially on nonresident tuition, places CU-Boulder close to a private university operating mode—without the concomitant autonomy and control over its destiny. While the university has achieved remarkable efficiencies, those efficiencies may not be enough to sustain excellence in the future. The economic crisis has exacerbated an already difficult fiscal position and is affecting private fundraising as potential donors deal with reductions in net worth. While federal stimulus funds may afford some relief, they cannot provide a sustainable solution.

Funding *Flagship 2030* initiatives. The university recognizes that the *Flagship 2030* strategic plan is ambitious and will require visionary investment strategies. These strategies will be needed in three general areas: supporting basic operations and infrastructure, ensuring competitiveness in core areas, and advancing the Flagship Initiatives. Funding models for *Flagship 2030* call for 4.2 percent revenue growth above inflation on a sustained basis (10 to 15 years) to be more competitive with peers and invest in new distinctive initiatives.

Supporting the research enterprise. Federal funding of research contracts and grants is a major part of the university's overall revenues and helps sustain the qualitative aspects of graduate education at CU-Boulder. The university plans to expand its research activities, which will create greater needs for infrastructure, personnel, and resources. At the same time, potential changes in federal funding patterns could create uncertainties for the university's plans. CU-Boulder's research enterprise currently is well diversified among federal agencies, but concerns remain about future funding allocations.

Gaining clarity on the university's role in Colorado and beyond. While CU-Boulder's mission as a comprehensive research university might be understood on campus, the same may not be true among all constituencies in the state. As a public university, CU-Boulder's future success depends on establishing more productive partnerships with Coloradans, their elected representatives, and other key stakeholders.

Flagship 2030: Next Steps

Rethink the university's financial models. Financial models for supporting the strategic plan are being developed with an emphasis on diversifying and expanding the resource base. In order to make *Flagship 2030* a reality, funding strategies must be forward thinking and entrepreneurial. All potential sources for additional revenues are being explored, including increased state tax support, tuition, private fundraising, research contracts and grants, entrepreneurial initiatives, technology transfer, and budget reallocations. CU-Boulder supports the CU Foundation in its efforts to focus more strongly on a donor-centered operating philosophy, reducing expenses where possible without affecting the frontline fundraisers, and focusing on the initiatives of *Flagship 2030*. The current atmosphere of fiscal volatility at the national and state levels makes planning difficult, but the university plans to implement high-priority initiatives as resources become available.

Increase understanding of the university's mission and role. In order to gain public support for *Flagship 2030*, CU-Boulder must establish broad-based understanding of its mission and role. In particular, the university must communicate the benefits and services brought by a competitive and highly regarded research institution of higher learning in the state of Colorado. CU-Boulder plans to enhance its marketing and communication efforts regarding its services to the state, including economic and cultural impacts, education, outreach, and existing and potential partnerships.

Chapter 6. Student Learning and Effective Teaching

CRITERION 3:

The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.

Introduction

From its early days, CU-Boulder has embraced its responsibility for educating future generations of citizens and leaders and for fostering student learning and promoting great teaching. This chapter begins with an overview of the ways in which the university strives to improve general education through a rigorous core curriculum with ongoing assessment of its academic quality. It also discusses the broad array of tools used to improve undergraduate education as a whole, including numerous assessment and evaluation activities.

Assessment has played and continues to play a key role in improving learning and teaching. In the last decade, students and their instructors have benefited from improvements in courses, general education, degree programs, and cocurricular activities—at both the undergraduate and graduate levels—resulting from assessment practices. The activities outlined in this chapter illustrate CU-Boulder’s commitment to ongoing assessment and improved student learning. While many efforts discussed in this chapter improve both graduate and undergraduate education, others are focused on undergraduate education alone. With 84 percent of CU-Boulder students enrolled at the undergraduate level, the university places a high priority on achieving excellent undergraduate education. Graduate education is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

As described in this chapter, student intellectual growth is promoted through numerous learning environments, ranging from Residential Academic Programs (RAPs) to undergraduate research opportunities. Also included is a summary of activities aimed at cultivating an inclusive climate for learning. In addition, this chapter outlines the ways in which CU-Boulder nurtures outstanding teaching through supportive programs, innovative approaches, and recognition of excellence. The final section describes the various resources that support learning, including the libraries, academic technologies, the physical infrastructure, and staff personnel.

Chapter Outline

Assessing and Improving Student Learning

Core Component 3A. *The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.*

General Education at the Core

- Enhancing the core curriculum
- Writing program
- Quantitative reasoning
- Critical thinking
- Foreign languages

Enhancing Undergraduate Education

- Setting skill and knowledge goals
- The Colorado Challenge
- Assessment/improvement in departments and programs
- Inter-departmental improvement initiatives
- Assessment/improvement initiatives within schools and colleges
- Improvement through specialized accreditations
- Campus-wide support for assessment
- Advising services
- Cocurricular learning
- Learning through student development

Elevating the Learning Environment

Core Component 3C. *The organization creates effective learning environments.*

Learning through Undergraduate Research

- Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program
- Discovery Learning Center

Creative Learning Environments

- Integrated Teaching and Learning Program
- Visual Arts Complex
- Anderson Language Technology Center
- ATLAS Institute.
- Conference on World Affairs
- Experiential and service learning
- Internships

Academic Neighborhoods

- Residential learning
- Honors Program
- Special enrichment programs

Inclusive Climate for Learning

- CU-LEAD Alliance
- Center for Multicultural Affairs
- Miramontes Arts and Sciences Program
- Women's Resource Center
- The Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Resource Center
- Veterans Affairs Office
- Broadening Opportunity through Leadership and Diversity engineering programs
- Student Outreach Retention Center for Equity
- Interactive Theatre Project
- Student Academic Services Center
- Pre-College Services

Nurturing Effective Teaching

Core Component 3B. *The organization values and supports effective teaching.*

Promoting Exceptional Teaching

- Faculty Course Questionnaire
- Faculty Teaching Excellence Program
- Graduate Teacher Program
- New faculty orientation
- Mentoring junior faculty
- IMPART faculty fellowship program
- President's Teaching Scholars
- Summer Session instructional grants and FIRST
- Tenure policies and teaching

Supporting Novel Approaches to Teaching

- Geography Faculty Development Alliance
- Colorado STEM Learning Assistant Program
- Faculty innovation initiatives

Affirming Great Teaching

- Hazel Barnes Prize
- Other teaching recognition programs

Resources for Learning

Core Component 3D. *The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.*

Redefining the Modern Library

- Vision for the libraries
- Retooling the libraries
- Library technology advances
- Addressing issues of funding and space

New Technologies for Learning and Teaching

- Academic technologies initiative
- Promoting uses of information technology
- Technology infrastructure improvements
- Securing campus data

Improving the Physical Infrastructure

- Student support for facilities
- Flagship 2030* building needs
- Campus master plan
- Center for Community
- Enhancing instructional facilities

Staff Support for the Learning Environment

Summary

At CU-Boulder, general education and the core curriculum are central to undergraduate education, as demonstrated by the care and attention paid to their assessment and improvement. The same care and attention are applied to undergraduate education as a whole, in which learning goals are defined, faculty are challenged to expect more of students, and assessment activities span all levels of the institution. Key roles also are played by advising services, cocurricular activities, and student development. Creative learning environments abound, in such venues as high-touch laboratories, visual arts studios, and foreign language multimedia centers. The university seeks to cultivate an inclusive climate for excellence in which differences are celebrated and respectful communication is the norm. A broad array of programs provide multiple opportunities for students to connect with each other, faculty, and staff in the pursuit of learning. Excellence in teaching remains a high priority for the University of Colorado at Boulder. Numerous initiatives offer avenues for improvement in instruction, from student input questionnaires, in-house assistance by outstanding faculty, and graduate student teaching programs. The university supports innovative approaches to teaching through several organized programs as well as individual faculty initiatives. CU-Boulder's great teachers are honored for their performance through several recognition programs.

Resources for learning and teaching have moved beyond traditional definitions to incorporate technology in all areas of the university's infrastructure, from using libraries, to conducting everyday business, to learning in smart classrooms. The physical infrastructure provides the backdrop and space for all the university's work, and important improvements have been made with the help of students, institutional investments, and private donors. Staff support is a vital part of CU-Boulder's success, making valued contributions to the mission of the institution.

In summary, the academic community of the University of Colorado at Boulder values excellence in teaching and student learning, as demonstrated by its commitment to continuous improvement and dedication to the institution's mission. This commitment is exemplified in a broad array of programs, activities, assessment practices, and individual initiatives.

Discussion

Key Strengths

Commitment to effective teaching. The Faculty Teaching Excellence Program has developed a national reputation for modeling and developing great teaching. Participation rates are growing, indicating an increased emphasis on effective teaching in the culture of the institution. The Graduate Teaching Program, including the Lead Graduate Teacher Network, helps prepare future professors for their teaching mission. Innovative programs, such as the Science Education Initiative, have shown remarkable results in applying new teaching methods, especially in large introductory classes.

Array of innovative learning communities. The university strives to provide learning enrichment opportunities for its large undergraduate population. The Residential Academic Programs offer unique learning environments for students with shared interests. Participants enjoy small classes held in residence halls, with cocurricular and social activities available. Many include opportunities for service learning and volunteer programs. Student achievement is promoted through undergraduate research, intellectual challenges, collaboration, and focus on communication skills. Inclusive climates for learning are enhanced through the work of coordinated programs supporting first-generation college students and others. Student development models are used in creating supportive learning environments that help develop the whole student.

Challenges and Issues

Maintaining momentum in assessment of student learning. Since the campus's last reaccreditation, numerous improvements have been made to assessment programs. The challenge now is to maintain the momentum of these improvements and to continue to promulgate a "culture of assessment" throughout the campus. CU-Boulder leaders recognize this ongoing challenge and intend to continue improvement with the help of the Assessment Oversight Committee, deans, department heads, faculty, and staff.

Evolution of the university library. Changes in technology and usage patterns have placed new pressures on the role and nature of the modern library, requiring changes in facilities, staffing, and technological infrastructure. New strategic approaches and resources will be needed to respond as libraries evolve in the way they serve faculty, students, and the public.

Enhancing the physical campus. While students recently took the initiative to help pay for several buildings on campus, they cannot—and should not have to—continue underwriting state facilities. The university must initiate successful partnerships with state leaders, including the governor and legislators, to identify the resources necessary to fund the new campus master plan.

Flagship 2030: Next Steps

Bolstering faculty/student interaction. *Flagship 2030* calls for increasing the numbers of tenure-track faculty to help improve student/faculty ratios and help promote the learning experience. Progress already has been made toward meeting this goal, although current economic circumstances present significant obstacles.

Enhancing the curriculum. The plan also proposes to redefine the way undergraduate education is delivered, including an examination of the current curriculum and teaching methodologies. By improving undergraduate education with the help of authentic assessment practices, the university aims better to prepare students for living and working in a changing world and enhancing the value of their degrees.

Chapter 7. Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

CRITERION 4:

The organization promotes a life of learning for its faculty, administration, staff, and students by fostering and supporting inquiry, creativity, practice, and social responsibility in ways consistent with its mission.

Introduction

Research universities give people the extraordinary opportunity to engage in a life of learning, from the conception of ideas to their application in solving some of society's most vexing issues. At the University of Colorado at Boulder, a diverse academic community of internationally recognized scientists, engineers, artists, and humanists make important contributions to the world's body of knowledge, creating innovations that change people's lives. This chapter describes the myriad ways that CU-Boulder faculty and students engage in leading-edge scholarship and creative work and the integration of their work with undergraduate and graduate learning.

As described in this chapter, the university has developed a strong reputation for interdisciplinary work that draws expertise from all corners of the campus and beyond. Key initiatives in *Flagship 2030* are helping CU-Boulder leverage these strengths to higher levels of discovery and learning by providing strategic focus and institutional support. As proposed in the plan, a review of the university's curriculum, including its general education requirements, will help realign the learning experience with the needs of a changing world. The strategic plan provides a framework for extending the university's reach as an international institution while fostering responsibility and personal growth in the learning community at home.

Chapter Outline

Research and Creative Work: Pushing the Limits of Knowledge

Core Component 4A. *The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.*

Flagship 2030: Enhancing the Research Enterprise

Flagship 2030 research initiatives

Infrastructure for Research and Creative Work

Achievements in Research and Creative Work

A Tradition of Interdisciplinary Work

Core Component 4A. *The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.*

Institutes and Centers

Research institutes

ATLAS Institute

Research centers

Academic Partnerships

Interdepartmental initiatives

Collaborations with national laboratories

Investing in Major University Initiatives

Core Component 4A. *The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.*

Biotechnology Initiative

Energy Initiative

Aerospace Initiative

Geosciences Initiative

Interdisciplinary Computational Science and Engineering Initiative

Other Key Initiatives

Applying New Knowledge Through Technology Transfer

Core Component 4D. *The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

Accelerating Technology Transfer

Promoting Responsible Application

Milestones in Technology Transfer

Aligning Curriculum for the 21st Century

Core Component 4B. *The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.*

Core Component 4C. *The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society.*

Shaping Curriculum for the New Flagship

Involving Stakeholders in Student Learning

Integrating Discovery and Learning

Synergies in research and teaching

Hands-on learning

Preparing for Lifelong Learning in a Global Society

Internationalization Task Force

International degree proposal

Infrastructure for internationalization

International Residential Academic Program

International students and scholars

International focus

Graduate and Professional Education

Core Component 4B. *The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.*

Role of the Graduate School

Graduate faculty

Assessment of graduate programs

Graduate programs

Graduate education initiatives

Fostering Responsibility in the Learning Community

Core Component 4D. *The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.*

Supporting Civic and Personal Growth

Institute for Ethical and Civic Engagement

Student codes

Modeling and Teaching Social Responsibility

Commitment to community

Commitment to the environment

Promoting Ethical Conduct

Summary

Research and creative work is a particular strength of the University of Colorado at Boulder, with faculty members garnering ever-increasing levels of federal contracts and grants. The faculty's research accomplishments are based both in disciplinary and interdisciplinary arenas and are recognized by many prestigious prizes and awards. The university leverages its research strengths by launching strategic initiatives that respond to state, national, and international priorities. With increasing research activity has come greater achievements in technology transfer, applying new knowledge to the needs of society.

CU-Boulder also has made strides in aligning its curriculum with the needs of a complex world, working to improve student learning on an ongoing basis and involving constituencies in molding the curriculum. In particular, the university has developed an array of programs that integrate learning and discovery, such as Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Discovery Learning Center, the Mountain Research Station, and many others. With the support of *Flagship 2030*, CU-Boulder has launched a focused effort to increase the university's international perspective and influence, with the guidance of the Internationalization Task Force. Initiatives include building a stronger infrastructure for international activities, a Global Studies Residential Academic Program, enhanced international student and scholar services, study abroad programs, and new centers with an international focus. The university's mission is further enhanced by improvements in graduate and professional education, including new joint degree programs, interdisciplinary certificate programs, and initiatives in graduate education supported by *Flagship 2030*. CU-Boulder demonstrates its commitment to social responsibility and ethics through programs that emphasize civic engagement, ethical conduct by all members of the university community, and stewardship of the environment. The university emphasizes the highest standards of ethical and regulatory compliance in all its activities, including the research enterprise.

Discussion

Key Strengths

Highly productive and innovative research enterprise. CU-Boulder engages in highly productive research activities, with faculty earning international recognition for top-tier accomplishments in scholarship and discovery. Faculty are particularly adept at winning competitive contracts and grants, even in the face of federal budget constraints.

History of interdisciplinary engagement. A strong system of research institutes, centers, and laboratories has nurtured a university culture of scholarship and creative work that transcends academic boundaries. University research and scholarship activities are enhanced by the application of multiple perspectives to the examination of complex questions.

Strategic and bold initiatives. The university anticipates and responds to emerging global issues by marshalling resources and efforts through major strategic initiatives. Partnerships are formed with internal and external entities to promote and support the work of these collaborative endeavors.

Effective partnerships with federal laboratories. For more than five decades, CU-Boulder has collaborated with national laboratories located in the Boulder area. These relationships have resulted in the formation of major joint institutes and many research collaborations involving students and faculty.

Growth in technology transfer. Investments in the technology transfer infrastructure are resulting in significant increases in the applications of CU-Boulder research. A number of start-up companies and licensing opportunities have emerged from acceleration of technology transfer.

Challenges and Issues

Support for research. Limited state support for research has required the university to make institutional investments to help build CU-Boulder's remarkable research enterprise. Future growth and success will require more substantial, broad-based, and strategic support.

Research infrastructure. The university's current organization model for the research enterprise may not continue to provide the support needed to be competitive in the future. The *Flagship 2030* Research, Scholarship, and Creative Works Task Force has recommended a reorganization of the research enterprise, including a reconfiguration of the structures responsible for research administration.

Curricular review. CU-Boulder's school, colleges, and departments attend to curricular needs and opportunities in varying ways. Departments routinely revise curricula as part of assessment activities, and some colleges have established protocols for curriculum improvement. However, as the university looks toward the global society of 2030, the current curriculum will need more comprehensive evaluation, as noted in *Flagship 2030*.

Internationalizing the university. Even with a strong history of international activity, CU-Boulder recognizes the need for a strategic, proactive approach to internationalizing the university. External challenges, such as changes in immigration regulations and economic realities, have created impediments for reaching international goals, illustrating the necessity for a focused and strategic approach.

Increasing graduate enrollment. Despite efforts to increase the proportion of graduate students at CU-Boulder, little progress has been made in recent years. As noted in the *Flagship 2030* Graduate Education Task Force Report, support for graduate students is not competitive, and teaching loads are substantial.

Flagship 2030: Next Steps

Promoting the research enterprise. Through *Flagship 2030*, the university has committed to enhancing the institution’s research mission and identifying more broad-based resources for that purpose. The plan calls for increased investments in the infrastructure supporting research and in the people who conduct it. It also proposes a “research diamond” collaboration with other regional universities, businesses, government, and federal laboratories. Recommendations by the *Flagship 2030* Research, Scholarship, and Creative Works Task Force offer a roadmap for transforming the institution’s culture through organizational change and enhanced investments in the research enterprise.

Enhancing graduate education. The university has targeted an increase in the proportion of graduate students to reach 20 percent of total enrollment. Early steps include investments in graduate student support and identification of degree options and academic programs that encourage enrollment growth.

Improving the delivery of undergraduate education. In addition to increasing the size of the university’s faculty, CU-Boulder has issued a call to re-examine its undergraduate education model. Under *Flagship 2030*, the university will review the current curriculum and teaching methodologies in order to better prepare students for a rapidly changing world. The Undergraduate Education Task Force proposes curricular and structural changes that would distinguish the university among public research institutions. It recommends increased investments in the Honors Program, assessment protocols, residential college concepts, interdisciplinary programs, experiential programs, international exchange, and internships in the nation’s capital. The university is considering the task force recommendations as it moves forward with the implementation of *Flagship 2030*.

Transcending traditional academic boundaries. CU-Boulder already has a strong and successful tradition of interdisciplinary work, but more can be done. New initiatives that cut across departmental units are being launched in such areas as energy, biotechnology, aerospace, geosciences, and computational science and engineering. These and other broad-based endeavors require a new framework for keeping CU-Boulder at the forefront of collaborative achievement. The university also intends to build current strengths in multi- and interdisciplinary engagement more fully into the curriculum and degree offerings.

Chapter 8. Engagement and Service

CRITERION 5:

As called for by its mission, the organization identifies its constituencies and serves them in ways both value.

Introduction

The breadth and scope of CU-Boulder’s commitment to service, outreach, and engagement is underscored by key words in the title of the university’s strategic plan: *Flagship 2030: Serving Colorado, Engaged in the World*. Service and engagement are not new concepts to CU-Boulder; examples abound, both past and present. For decades, CU-Boulder faculty, students, and staff have demonstrated a strong orientation toward service, often reaching out in individual or small-group initiatives to engage with local communities, communities around the state, and national and international groups. Now, CU-Boulder is working to harness some of that initiative and energy with a coordinated, coherent strategy for outreach and engagement that features increased support, more focused planning, expanded reach, and broader recognition. This chapter offers a discussion of several key traits of the engaged, responsive university—and the degree to which CU-Boulder fits that profile.

Chapter Outline

Mission-Focused Engagement

Core Component 5A. *The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.*

Core Component 5B. *The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*

Planning for Engagement

Flagship 2030 and engagement

Task Force recommendations

Constituency Involvement in Planning

Defining the Terms

Core Component 5A. *The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.*

Core Component 5B. *The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*

Institutional Support Structures

Core Component 5B. *The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*

Core Component 5D. *Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.*

Continuing Education

Professional Continuing Education

University Outreach

Ethical and Civic Engagement

Building Alumni Partnerships

Parent Relations

Pervasive and Deliberate Engagement

Core Component 5B. *The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.*

Core Component 5C. *The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.*

Engagement by Students

Volunteerism

Service learning

Experiential learning

Engagement by Faculty

Engagement by Staff and Administration

Admissions recruitment

Administrative initiatives

Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

Core Component 5C. *The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.*

Core Component 5D. *Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.*

Reciprocal Benefits

Assessing Engagement Activities

Core Component 5D. *Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.*

Outreach Reported by Faculty

Recognition for Engagement

Community Feedback

Summary

The CU-Boulder community has demonstrated a long-standing commitment to service and engagement consistent with the mission of the institution. The university's support structures enhance its capacity for service and engagement through such programs as continuing education, an active Outreach Committee, and the Institute for Ethical and Civic Engagement. Engagement with alumni and parents is a high priority for the university, as these constituents play an important role in CU-Boulder's long-term progress. All levels of the university community are involved in service and engagement activities that include student volunteerism, service and experiential learning, faculty collaboration with constituency groups and communities, web resources for Colorado K–12 teachers, and many more. At CU-Boulder, service and engagement projects are characterized by mutual and reciprocal benefits accruing to both recipient and provider. Assessment and analysis of these activities are conducted through formal and informal structures, such as the Faculty Report of Professional Activities (FRPA), world-wide recognitions, and feedback from service partners.

Discussion

Key Strengths

Strong commitment to engagement. The CU-Boulder community is heavily involved in service, outreach, and engagement activities with internal and external constituencies. Such activities are consistent with the university’s mission as a research and teaching institution. Efforts have been made to establish common understanding of the definitions of service, outreach, and engagement—and institutional structures exist to support them. Continuing education programs provide opportunities for lifelong and distance learning to a wide range of audiences.

Community service. Various mechanisms bring CU-Boulder resources to communities across Colorado, and student service engagement is encouraged through ethical and civic education programs. Alumni and parents are recognized as important components of the university’s success, with numerous activities designed to maintain continuous connections with them. Service learning and experiential learning are celebrated as effective means of educating students, while serving community needs. Programs have been developed to engage students, faculty, staff, and administrators in pervasive outreach to multiple constituencies, including Colorado K–12 communities, business and industry, multicultural communities, and state and local communities.

Reciprocal benefits. CU-Boulder’s service, outreach, and engagement efforts almost always offer reciprocal benefits for all partners in the activities. Students learn from their service, faculty incorporate engagement in teaching and research, and community partners receive valuable benefits from the process. The result is a richly rewarding interplay of contribution and benefit, as demonstrated commonly by positive feedback on all sides. National and international recognition of outstanding programs serve to identify models for future planning, particularly through *Flagship 2030*.

Challenges and Issues

Coordination and communication. While pervasive, CU-Boulder’s engagement activities often are entrepreneurial in nature and lack full institutional support and coordination. Numerous champions give voice to the value of service and engagement, but resources often are decentralized and sporadic. In some cases, indeed, there is the potential for duplication of effort, even in the face of scarce resources. The university’s communications strategies sometimes are not closely linked with outreach and engagement activity.

Recognition in faculty processes. Like other major universities, CU-Boulder wrestles with the issue of how best to recognize faculty outreach and engagement activities in merit allocation and other faculty processes. The notion of “public scholarship” is still being discussed and defined within the context of the research university.

Assessment methods. Assessment of outreach and engagement continues to be uneven. While some programs utilize multiple tools for measuring levels of effectiveness, others rely more heavily on single methods, such as verbal feedback from audiences.

Flagship 2030: Next Steps

Flagship 2030 initiative. Despite the challenges, opportunities exist for expanding the university's commitment to service and engagement. The university's strategic plan specifically calls for such expansion as well as taking a more coherent and coordinated approach. *Flagship 2030* task forces were even more specific. They called for a coordinated, deliberate campus strategy for outreach and engagement; faculty participation in the development of evaluation, recognition, and reward systems for faculty outreach; lifelong learning, professional development, and online learning opportunities; and increased integration of civic engagement and service learning models into the standard curriculum and graduation plans for undergraduates.

Strategies and action plans. Under each of the Outreach and Engagement Task Force's primary recommendations were numerous action strategies, ranging from clarifying definitions to establishing appropriate infrastructure and oversight to providing appropriate funding. The task force suggested establishing an Office for Outreach and Engagement (OOE) to help support, coordinate, and communicate the outreach and engagement activities of the campus as a whole. Other suggested strategies included clarifying the role of faculty in outreach and engagement, along with providing for a tiered funding mechanism to support work at three levels: individual faculty, department or unit, and campus initiatives.

Lifelong learning. The task force also recommended various actions to bridge the development programs between the university, alumni, business, and the community. The group suggested the need for a long-term plan to assure appropriate lifelong learning programs offered on campus, off campus, and online. Expanded professional development programs were recommended, consistent with market studies with key business and industry groups. In addition, the task force suggested the university examine the merits and feasibility of an online undergraduate degree completion program for adult learners who have not completed their undergraduate degrees. The group also recommended that CU-Boulder examine the potential for expanding the number of online professional master's degree and certificate programs.

Chapter 9. Conclusion and Request for Continued Accreditation

The primary purpose of the self-study report is to assist the Higher Learning Commission team in evaluating the University of Colorado at Boulder for re-accreditation, but the process itself is helping define the future of the institution. By closely examining its own strengths, barriers, and opportunities, the university gains a better understanding of itself and, therefore, can more effectively plan for the future.

Request for Continued Accreditation

The University of Colorado at Boulder requests continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. As demonstrated in this self-study and associated materials, the university has responded to areas of concerns raised by the HLC/NCA evaluating team in 2000 and provided evidence of meeting the Higher Learning Commission's criteria for accreditation.

The self-study process was strengthened and enhanced by the planning activities that led to the university's *Flagship 2030* strategic plan. The work of the *Flagship 2030* task forces reporting in 2008 served to inform the self-study review throughout the process. Materials and reports produced by the task forces are available online and in printed format for use by the evaluation team.

Appendices

Appendix A: Boulder Campus Map

Appendix B: Organization charts for University of Colorado System and CU-Boulder Chancellor, Provost, and Senior Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer

Appendix C: Federal Compliance Summary (credits, program length, and tuition; student complaints; transfer policies; verification of student identity; Title IV and related responsibilities, including crime information; advertising and recruitment materials; relationship with other accrediting agencies and state regulatory boards; public notification of an evaluation visit)

Appendix D: Specialized Accreditations in business, clinical psychology, education, engineering, international English, journalism, law, music, speech language and hearing sciences, museum, and Wardenburg health center

Appendix E: Resource Room Examples

Appendix F: Fall 2009 Enrollment Update—As of fall census; update of Self-Study Display 1.4, page 14

Click here to view the entire self-study report in PDF format, or visit www.colorado.edu/accreditation for more information.