UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER
HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION ACCREDITATION 2020
ASSURANCE REVIEW

Draft for Campus Review
September 16, 2019

Criterion 3. Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support

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

3.A. The institution’s degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

1. Courses and programs are current and required levels of performance by students are appropriate to the degree, certificate or 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 (e.g. on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements or any other modality).

3.A.1. and 3.A.2. CU Boulder ensures the currency and appropriateness of its courses, degrees, certificates and other credentials and of their learning goals through formal processes that govern new and existing courses and degree programs.

New courses and programs

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

- Proposals for new courses are reviewed and approved by each college/school’s curriculum committee. Information required for new course proposals is submitted through a standardized process administered by the Office of the Registrar and includes how the course fits within the existing curriculum(a), principal topics covered, required readings, student learning outcomes, and overlap with, duplication of or impact on other courses.
- Following University of Colorado administrative policy, a proposal for a new degree (undergraduate or graduate) or academic unit is reviewed and endorsed by the relevant college/school dean(s) and curriculum committee(s) and by the vice provost for undergraduate education or vice provost for graduate education (or both) in consultation with their faculty advisory committee(s) before being reviewed and endorsed in turn by the senior vice provost for academic planning and assessment, the provost, and the chancellor. The new degree or academic unit undergoes review and approval by the Board of Regents. Student learning goals are a required element of proposals for new degrees, whether offered in an existing or a new
academic unit, and those learning goals are examined at all levels of review. Workforce demand as a measure of likely degree outcomes is also a component of a new degree proposal.

- Certificates and minors comprise existing courses that have already been reviewed and approved. The curriculum and learning goals for a proposed new certificate are reviewed and approved by the vice provost for undergraduate education or vice provost for graduate education, as appropriate, in consultation with their advisory committee. The curriculum and learning goals for a proposed new undergraduate minor are approved and reviewed by the curriculum committee and the dean of the relevant college/school according to college/school procedure.

Existing courses and programs

- Revisions to existing courses are reviewed through the same process as new courses (see above). In addition, the Office of the Registrar annually reviews courses that have not been offered in the previous five years and works with the colleges/schools to determine whether they should be removed from the catalog.

- Existing academic programs, including existing degrees and minors, are reviewed on a seven-year cycle through the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) program review. Program review includes unit self-study, review by a faculty committee external to the unit, review by a team of disciplinary experts outside the University of Colorado and review by the ARPAC committee itself, which comprises tenured faculty from all schools and colleges. In this process, units are reviewed in aggregated clusters (for example, social sciences or arts and humanities) that allow for comparison across cognate disciplines. After each review is completed, each unit must respond to the committee’s recommendations for three years. In the fourth year, a team of external reviewers examines the aggregated units to assess their progress as a group of shared disciplines and set the agenda for progress toward the next review. Examples of degrees recently flagged for redirection or new investments include the discontinuance of the PhD program in comparative literature and the creation of a new bachelors-accelerated master’s degree in ethnic studies (BA) and education (MA). One criterion of ARPAC review includes how the unit assesses whether students have achieved the learning goals that each program has established for its undergraduate and graduate degrees (see 4.B.1.). In addition to the ARPAC review, many degree programs in professional fields are accredited externally by their disciplinary organizations. These accreditation processes typically include review of curricula and learning goals. Finally, CU Boulder uses its internally designed Academic Prioritization process to measure the effectiveness of degree programs in terms of their resource use, declared majors and graduates, research/creative work productivity and quality, contribution to educating nonmajors, and student surveys on teaching effectiveness (see also 4.C.3. and 5.C.2.).

- While minors are reviewed during the ARPAC program review, certificates have not been explicitly subject to a regular review process. The Graduate School and the Office of Undergraduate Education are working with the senior vice provost for academic planning and assessment to rectify this omission.

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

- Under the distance model, fully online degree and certificate offerings include a limited number of graduate degrees and certificates, a postbaccalaureate degree in computer science, a BA in interdisciplinary studies (a degree completion program), and two noncredit certificates. Continuing Education administers the delivery of these online courses, degrees and certificates, all of which are overseen by the relevant academic unit. CU Boulder has proceeded with caution in online education, reflecting the faculty’s and administration’s desire to maintain academic quality. In fall 2018, only 473 of 29,753 degree-seeking undergraduate students (1.6%) were enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, and only 1,975 (6.6%) were enrolled in at least one, but not all, distance education courses. The percentage of graduate students enrolled exclusively in online courses was higher and reflects enrollment in popular online graduate degrees and certificates. In fall 2018, 506 of 6,522 degree-seeking graduate students (7.8%) were enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, whereas only 221 (3.4%) were enrolled in at least one, but not all, distance education courses. As part of the Academic Futures and Financial Futures strategic initiatives (see 1.A.3.), in 2019 the provost convened an Online Strategy Working Group, one of whose charges is to develop a strategy to ensure that enough courses are available online to effectively and flexibly enable students to participate, both as residents and remotely, while still maintaining teaching excellence.

- Under the correspondence model, as discussed further in 3.B.4., CU Boulder has developed an online, MOOC-based professional master’s program in electrical engineering delivered through the Coursera platform that will begin its for-credit offerings in late 2019.

CU Boulder is approved to offer degree programs at one additional location, CU South Denver in Lone Tree, Colorado, where offerings include the Leeds School of Business evening MBA program and a noncredit certificate in personal finance planning that prepares professionals to sit for the Certified Financial Planner examination. Courses are taught by CU Boulder Leeds School of Business faculty and are the same as courses offered at the main Boulder campus.

CU Boulder also offers undergraduate degrees in select engineering programs at Colorado Mesa University; similar degrees are being developed for offering at Western Colorado University. These programs, however, are treated as transfer articulation agreements and not as additional locations. They follow a 2+2 model where the first two years of education are provided by the other campus and the second two years provided by CU Boulder, with CU Boulder curricula, instructors, advising and administrative supervision.

CU Boulder does not participate in any consortial agreements. The university offers two dual credit courses for high school students: GRMN 1010 with Widefield High School, Colorado Springs; and EDUC 2800 with STRIVE Preparatory Schools (STRIVE-Prep), Denver. These courses are administered by Continuing Education.

3.B. The institution demonstrates that the exercise of intellectual inquiry and the acquisition, application and integration of broad learning and skills are integral to its educational programs.
1. The general education program is appropriate to the mission, educational offerings and degree levels of the institution.

2. The institution articulates the purposes, content and intended learning outcomes of its undergraduate general education requirements. The general education program is grounded in a philosophy or framework that was developed by the institution or adopted from an established framework. It imparts broad knowledge and intellectual concepts to students and leads to the development of skills and attitudes that the institution believes every college-educated person should possess.

3. All degree programs offered by the institution engage students in collecting, analyzing and communicating information; in mastering modes of inquiry or creative work; and in developing skills adaptable to changing environments.

4. The education offered by the institution recognizes the human and cultural diversity of the world in which students live and work.

5. The faculty and students contribute to scholarship, creative work and the discovery of knowledge to the extent appropriate to their programs and the institution’s mission.

3.B.1. In the Academic Futures strategic initiative, the entire CU Boulder community—faculty, staff and students—came together to express common educational purposes for the entire university. Among these was CU Boulder’s commitment to the principles of a liberal arts education.

Each of the seven colleges/schools/programs offering undergraduate degrees at CU Boulder is empowered to plan, implement and review its own general education requirements. As a result, the university does not have a single general education program. However, as the largest college and the home for liberal arts, the College of Arts and Sciences (A&S) effectively provides courses and a curricular framework for undergraduate skills and breadth requirements across the university. With only a few variations, A&S Gen Ed is also used as the general education curriculum of three other schools: the Leeds School of Business, the School of Education and the College of Music (with the exception of Bachelor of Music students in music performance). The three remaining colleges/schools/programs—the College of Media, Communication and Information (CMCI), the Program in Environmental Design and the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS)—make broader use of A&S’s general education outline while maintaining their own requirements. (See 3.B.2. for details.) The new Program in Exploratory Studies (PES), which admits new students (including pre-business and pre-engineering students) who have not yet affiliated with a school/college, directs students into a general education curriculum that will match that of their likely major.

3.B.2. As described above, most undergraduate students at CU Boulder are covered by the Gen Ed curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences, with the rest covered by the general education curricula of the College of Media, Communication and Information (CMCI), the Program in Environmental Design and the College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS). These four main general education curricula are outlined as follows:

1. The Gen Ed curriculum in A&S, also used (with slight variation) by the Leeds School of Business, the School of Education and the College of Music (with the exception of Bachelor of Music students in music performance), was implemented in 2018 after a four-year faculty discussion, planning and approval process. Its distribution requirement includes courses in the natural sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities; two diversity-related courses are also required. Skills-related course requirements include written communication, quantitative
reasoning and math skills, and foreign language. The curriculum is designed to provide a broad liberal arts education and ensure that students venture into diverse areas of learning. Its flexibility allows students to add minors or second majors.

2. The **CMCI Core Curriculum**, established in 2015 with the founding of the college, includes liberal arts learning with development of the skills needed for careers in communication, information and media. Its breadth and point-of-view requirements resemble the distribution requirements in A&S Gen Ed, with the additional stipulation that two courses must cover historical topics. Skills courses required include written communication, upper-division composition and expression, quantitative reasoning, and computing.

3. The **Program in Environmental Design Core Curriculum**, which takes effect in fall 2019, includes liberal arts learning with preprofessional training for careers in architecture, sustainable planning and design, and related fields. The curriculum’s breadth requirements resemble the distribution requirements in A&S Gen Ed, except that no courses specifically on diversity-related topics are required (see 3.B.4.). Skills required include written communication, quantitative reasoning and foreign language.

4. **General education in CEAS** requires 18 credit hours in social sciences, humanities and writing to provide a liberal arts background and writing skills to engineering students.

While distinct, these four general education curricula all respond directly to CU Boulder’s stated learning goals for all Boulder baccalaureate graduates. The learning goals for A&S Gen Ed are for students to (1) develop skills of communication, expression and reasoning, and (2) understand our world, in all its dimensions, through critical inquiry. These are mirrored by the CMCI Core Curriculum’s learning goals to equip students “with the skills needed to produce, gather, archive, curate, analyze and evaluate the flood of information, messages, images, sounds and ideas that populate our complex and rapidly evolving global media landscape”; by the Program in Environmental Design’s goal of educating “students [who] become adept at complex problem-solving, analytical thinking, and leadership through coursework in theory, history, ecological impact, materials and methods, and systems thinking”; and by CEAS’s Strategic Vision goal of “producing well-rounded engineers with knowledge and skills in ethics, leadership, business and communication.”

Significant overlap among these four general education curricula makes it possible for students to move between colleges/schools by means of intrauniversity transfer, albeit with the aid of dedicated academic advising. The Academic Futures strategic initiative, however, has recommended a campuswide common curriculum, with the goals of making it easier for students to move from one college to another, signaling a commitment to the liberal arts and affirming CU Boulder’s mission as a public research university (see 1.A.1.). The provost has directed the formation of a faculty committee to begin discussing and developing a common curriculum in AY 2019–20. The very recent implementation (since 2015) of like-minded general education in A&S, CMCI and Environmental Design represents a big step toward this goal in that those three general education curricula are conceptually very similar.

The Academic Futures strategic initiative, following upon the recommendation of the Foundations of Excellence strategic initiative (see 1.A.3.), also endorsed a one-credit “CU 101” academic skills course requirement for undergraduate students. Such a course is offered by the School of Business and was piloted in AY 2018–19 in CEAS and the Program in Exploratory Studies. The curriculum committee in A&S has approved piloting such a course in fall 2019.
3.B.3. CU Boulder’s degree programs, both undergraduate and graduate, undergo a rigorous development process (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.) to ensure that they meet both disciplinary and institutional standards for methodological (collecting, analyzing, communicating information), disciplinary (mastery of modes) and contemporary (developing skills for a changing environment) practices. Like the general education programs described above, undergraduate degree programs adhere to CU Boulder’s learning goals for all Boulder baccalaureate graduates, which include critical thinking, communication, investigative analysis, argumentation and collaboration, as well as the formulation and investigation of research, creative work and open-ended questions. The goals are met through the general education curricula of each school/college (3.B.2.), as well as through the skills addressed in each undergraduate degree program, which teaches students the mastery of modes of inquiry or creative work as appropriate to that discipline or interdisciplinary study. For graduate students, the learning goals are set by the degree programs for students to master the critical thinking skills, reasoning skills, research or creative skills and modes of inquiry appropriate to that discipline or interdisciplinary study. Both undergraduate and graduate degree programs are regularly reviewed by the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.), which provides critical direction in updating these learning goals for our changing environment (see 4.B.1.).

3.B.4. CU Boulder is committed to human and cultural diversity in its vision, its strategic imperatives, its curriculum and its ongoing strategic initiatives (see 1.C.1. and 1.C.2.). The chancellor’s vision for the university “to be a leader in addressing the humanitarian, social and technological challenges of the 21st century” involves the university deeply in the pursuit of inclusivity and of recognizing that difference is part of the world. Reflecting the chancellor’s strategic imperatives to shape tomorrow’s leaders and positively impact humanity, CU Boulder has prioritized cultural diversity through a major strategic initiative in progress, the Inclusion, Diversity and Excellence in Academics (IDEA) Plan (see 1.A.3.).

Three units within Academic Affairs focus on the teaching and learning of cultural diversity:

- The Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) brings together a number of college/school and campus programs into the CU LEAD Alliance (Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity), which coordinates diversity, inclusivity and student success efforts, and supports students campus-wide as CU-LEAD Scholars. ODECE also houses a number of freestanding diversity efforts related to teaching and student success, such as the TRiO McNair Scholars Program and the annual Diversity & Inclusion Summit. ODECE is the sponsor of the IDEA Plan.
- The Division of Student Affairs brings together a number of student support services related to cultural diversity, and has established increasing students’ intercultural competence as one of the focus areas of its current strategic plan.
- The Office of Undergraduate Education is the home for Education Abroad, charged with student international experiences; International Student and Scholar Services; and International Student Academic Success, a separate office that develops coalitions among all units across campus that work with undergraduate international students.

Whatever their college or school, all undergraduate students learn to engage in diverse perspectives and become global citizens. As detailed in 3.B.2., diversity is an explicit part of the A&S and CMCI general education curricula, which apply to the vast majority of undergraduates at CU Boulder. Both A&S and CMCI require courses on diversity-related topics. The outliers are the general education curricula of Environmental Design and CEAS, which do not require such courses. Environmental Design, however,
declares that its mission includes “integrating diverse perspectives into the ENVD curriculum . . . to minimize ways design education disregards underrepresented perspectives.” Similarly, CEAS has articulated its strategic vision through four pillars, two of which—“Embracing Our Public Mission” and “Increase Our Global Engagement”—directly focus on understanding human and cultural diversity as essential to the education of engineers and computer scientists. Further, CEAS is working to strengthen its educational support of a diverse population of students by, for example, consolidating the college’s diversity, gender equity and multicultural support efforts into one team, the BOLD Center, and developing new 2+2 and transfer programs directed toward students from nontraditional backgrounds (see 3.A.3.).

A number of individual majors, minors and certificates emphasize human and cultural diversity: for example, the programs offered by Ethnic Studies, Women and Gender Studies and International Affairs; the MA program in Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity and the PhD program in Equity, Bilingualism and Biliteracy; and the undergraduate Minor in Global Engineering. Educational programs such as those offered by the Mortenson Center for Global Engineering and Education Abroad instill global awareness in students. In addition, the new MOOC-based master’s degree in electrical engineering, designed as a series of stackable certificates, extends a CU Boulder education to the globe in an affordable fashion that addresses global need.

Almost 10% of CU Boulder’s student body is international (see 1.A.2.). CU Boulder is committed to expanding its international education, a theme strongly developed in the Academic Futures strategic initiative, which offered recommendations regarding internationalizing the campus.

3.B.5. The chancellor’s vision for the university “to be a leader in addressing the humanitarian, social and technological challenges of the 21st century” and three strategic imperatives—to shape tomorrow’s leaders, be the top university for innovation and positively impact humanity—are drawn from CU Boulder’s mission as a major research institution committed to the discovery of new knowledge. The student experience is invested with this mandate. Some specific examples serve to illustrate how undergraduate and graduate student experience is intertwined in the university’s research and creative mission:

- **Research**: Undergraduates are directly involved in research projects through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP), which funds hundreds of undergraduate students each year to work with faculty mentors in every discipline through assistantships and individual grants.

- **Disciplinary knowledge**: Each department and college fosters research opportunities through which faculty and students connect to research within their field domain. To cite only two examples, the Ann and H.J. Smead Aerospace Engineering Sciences Department creates graduate and undergraduate research and industry connections for its students through the CU AeroSpace Ventures program, and the College of Media, Communication and Information supports research and entrepreneurial opportunities joining faculty and students through its Media Enterprise Group.

- **Interdisciplinary knowledge**: CU Boulder is uniquely defined by its 12 research institutes, which bring faculty, students and postdoctoral fellows together in interdisciplinary groups around research areas such as climate change, renewable energy, aerospace and wellness. Although these institutes do not offer curricula (except for sponsoring certificates), they shape CU Boulder’s intellectual identity, powerfully focusing faculty and graduate students across
disciplines on the changing nature of knowledge. They also include research and professional opportunities for undergraduate students. For example, the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics (LASP) hires and trains undergraduate students to staff its mission control center.

- **Artistic practice:** The creative arts programs on campus directly involve students in productions in the visual and performing arts that unite faculty and student creative work. For example, the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, the only professional Shakespeare company in the United States that is hosted by a top research university, hires both undergraduate and graduate students as actors, interns, dramaturges and technical staff engaged in bringing scholarship and theatrical craft to life on the stage. Similarly, the CU New Opera Workshop of the Eklund Opera Program has CU student singers working with acclaimed opera composers on new operas on the way to professional world premieres.

- **Community engagement:** Discovery at CU Boulder extends beyond discrete knowledge production to a broader sense of knowledge production within the community. In many ways, this occurs on the disciplinary level, as students participate in artistic, social and human-centered research and creative work through their departments of study. It is also a specific focus of student participation in the outreach programs discussed in 1.D.3., for example, CU Engage, which connects faculty and students to community-based learning and research.

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

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

1. 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; establishment of academic credentials for instructional staff; involvement in assessment of student learning).
2. All instructors are appropriately qualified, including those in dual credit, contractual and consortial programs.
3. All instructors are evaluated regularly and in accordance with established institutional policies and procedures.
4. The institution has (documented) processes and resources for assuring that all instructors are current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles; these processes and resources support their professional development.
5. Instructors are accessible for student inquiry.
6. Staff members who provide student support services (e.g. tutoring, financial aid advising, academic advising and co-curricular activities) are appropriately qualified, trained and supported in their professional development.
3.C.1. As of fall 2018, CU Boulder had 2,528 instructional faculty, a 19% increase since 2010. This increase outpaces the 15% growth in the student body during the same period, demonstrating CU Boulder’s commitment to improving the ratio of faculty who take on instructional and curricular supervision. Between 2011 and 2018, the student-faculty ratio fell from 19:1 to 18:1.

Between 2010 and 2018, tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty increased from 1,143 to 1,271 (11%); full-time instructor-track faculty, who generally have multi-year contracts, from 316 to 432 (34%); and lecturers, who hold part-time contingent positions, from 666 to 825 (24%). It is noteworthy that CU Boulder saw a relatively small shift away from TTT faculty toward instructor-track faculty or lecturers during this period. TTT faculty made up 54% of the total in 2010 and 50% in 2018; instructor-track faculty, 15% of the total in 2010 and 17% in 2018; and lecturers, 31% of the total in 2010 and 33% in 2018. Research faculty, who are not in TTT positions but assist in student research supervision (see 3.B.5.), increased in this period from 1,773 to 2,211 (25% increase).

Faculty oversight over the curriculum is established by the Laws of the Board of Regents. Faculty also have oversight over the peer evaluation intrinsic to faculty hiring, constituting the search committees for tenured, tenure-track and full-time instructor-track positions. Lecturer hiring is the purview of faculty serving as chairs, associate chairs or directors of programs; lecturers hired to teach courses in Continuing Education are subject to approval by the relevant department. Faculty and their departments/programs are the locus of assessment of student learning.

3.C.2. Tenured and tenure-track faculty have the terminal degree in the field and have met the requirements for the position as defined by their department and college/school. Instructor-track faculty and lecturers have an advanced degree in an appropriate discipline. These qualifications apply to all faculty, including those who teach in other locations (see 3.A.3.). Exceptions are made only when a faculty member’s career expertise suits them for teaching craft-driven or professional courses such as in musical performance or business practice. Faculty numbers as of July 2019 included only six TTT faculty and only seven instructor-track faculty whose highest degree was a bachelor’s degree. Continuing Education, which administers dual credit courses, adheres to the Higher Learning Commission policy on required qualifications for high school teachers offering college-level courses at a high school.

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

3.C.3. Regent Policy 11.B. requires that each primary unit develop explicit statements for criteria for assessing annual merit. TTT and instructor-track faculty are reviewed annually on their contributions to the teaching, research/creative work, and service missions of the primary unit and the university. Effort in each of these areas is weighted according to the workload assignment for the individual faculty member. Lecturers are evaluated by the hiring department.

Tenure-track faculty undergo comprehensive (pretenure) review and promotion and tenure review on a calendar established at the time of hiring; these reviews, along with reviews for promotion post-tenure, are conducted according to procedures established by Board of Regents and University of Colorado policy. University of Colorado policy requires that each primary unit have a document that describes the
criteria and procedures for reappointment, tenure and promotion in that unit. Tenured faculty are reviewed every five years in a post-tenure review process established by University of Colorado policy and administered by the colleges/schools according to CU Boulder guidelines. Instructor-track faculty are reviewed for reappointment in the last year of their contract according to criteria established in that contract. Procedures for instructor review are established by each college/school in conformance with common features established by CU Boulder.

3.C.4. CU Boulder has in place numerous policies, reviews and resources that help ensure that faculty stay current in their disciplines and adept in their teaching roles. CU Boulder policy on the Professional Rights and Duties of Faculty Members requires faculty to keep abreast of developments in the subject matter being taught, cooperate in university-mandated student evaluations of teaching and participate in peer evaluation of teaching in accordance with academic unit policy.

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

Tenured faculty maintain a professional plan that is reviewed during post-tenure review. Tenured faculty members who receive an annual merit evaluation of “below expectations” must undertake a Performance Improvement Agreement, and faculty members who receive two such evaluations in a five-year period or fail to meet the goals of a Performance Improvement Agreement undergo Extensive Review.

University of Colorado policy requires that primary units provide untenured tenure-track faculty with mentoring opportunities and encourages that such opportunities be extended to tenured faculty and other faculty. A number of mentoring and professional development resources are offered centrally. Support for teaching innovation and improvement is provided as described in 3.D.4.

3.C.5. CU Boulder policy on the Professional Rights and Duties of Faculty Members requires faculty to keep posted office hours. Individual colleges and schools require all faculty/instructors to list those hours in their syllabi and post them on department/program websites. All instructors are provided with office space to meet with students. Canvas, CU Boulder’s learning management system, provides both traditional and online students additional access to their instructors.

3.C.6. Position descriptions for staff members providing student support services, including duties, expectations and qualifications for the position, are advertised online and are screened for minimum qualifications by Human Resources (HR). The hiring and onboarding processes are further described in
5.A.4., as are the training and professional development opportunities available to all staff at CU Boulder. Staff performance is reviewed annually as described in 5.A.1.

Staff in student support areas are required to have the education, experience and, if applicable, professional licensure appropriate to their positions. For example, many staff members in Health and Wellness Services programs, including Medical Services and Counseling and Psychiatric Services, are required to be licensed. The Division of Student Affairs and its offices provide general and subject-specific trainings and professional development opportunities for student support staff. Financial aid counselors go through a wide variety of internal and external trainings, and they receive credentials by taking courses offered through the National Association of Financial Aid Administrators.

Professional staff members who have advising responsibility hold at least a bachelor’s degree (usually a master’s). These include academic advisors, who hold degrees in a relevant discipline; career advisors, who have relevant career experience (for example, business, law or health professions); and academic coaches, who are embedded within advising programs. Hiring for these positions is conducted within the relevant unit—academic departments, Career Services, Continuing Education, etc. A few advisors also have faculty roles, but faculty mentoring is distinct from academic advising. Advising staff are supported by their units for professional development opportunities at the regional and national levels, and training for newly hired advising staff is managed at the campus level by the Office of Undergraduate Education. The Campus Advising Executive Council and the CU Boulder Advising Council facilitate cross-campus coordination and support professional development events and awards for outstanding advising.

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

The Assessment and Planning Office within the Division of Student Affairs offers training to staff within the division on how to assess the effectiveness of programs within their units (see 4.B.2.).

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and 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 programs 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, museum collections, as appropriate to the institution’s offerings).

5. The institution provides to students guidance in the effective use of research and information resources.

3.D.1. Student support services are provided primarily by the Division of Student Affairs. Incoming students are supported in their transition to campus through New Student and Family Programs. All students are provided with a range of health and wellness services that include medical services, counseling and psychiatric services, an online mental health program, an office of victim assistance and a recovery center. All students have access to career counseling, help with off-campus housing and low-cost legal assistance.

Other services focus on particular student groups, for example, the Office of Disability Services and Veteran and Military Affairs. Student Support and Case Management (SSCM) helps students manage academic and personal problems, and faculty and staff can refer students to SSCM if they see signs of student distress. Prospective and current international students receive services from International Student and Scholars Services. In addition to the student support services outlined above, students enrolled in online courses and programs through Continuing Education have access to specialized distance-based support services in career exploration and composition and writing, along with academic advising.

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

The Graduate School sends incoming graduate students a series of newsletters the summer before matriculation with information they need before arriving on campus. The Safety & Support newsletter has information on counseling and psychological services, victim assistance, mandatory training and the like, and the Campus Business newsletter provides information on health insurance and immunization requirements. Representatives from support programs are present at the Graduate Student Orientation. The graduate student edition of CU Boulder Today regularly highlights these programs, and the Graduate School web site lists resources.

Results from the 2016 Senior Survey show that seniors are aware of most of the student support services the university provides, and the majority rate their satisfaction with the services as medium or high. The Unified Student Experience (USE) project to design the new Buff Portal will unify the online student experience, including access to information about student services, and is expected to improve student access to and use of support services.
3.D.2. The **CU LEAD Alliance**, a group of learning communities spanning the schools and colleges that provide scholarship opportunities, summer bridge programs, academic workshops, career exploration, tutoring services, peer mentoring, research opportunities and other programs, exists to ensure that all CU undergraduate students succeed (see 3.B.4.). **Tutoring services** are found across campus and through CU LEAD Alliance programs, and the **Academic Success and Achievement Program** provides free peer tutoring for all first-year students. The **Writing Center** serves all undergraduate and graduate students, and the **Anderson Language and Technology Center (ALTEC)** supports the language learning community. Many academic departments provide free tutoring or help rooms for students in specific disciplines. Academic support for international students, including free tutoring in English as a second language and U.S. academic culture, is provided by the **International Student Academic Success Program**, which also provides resources for faculty who teach international students. The Graduate School provides academic support to graduate students through its peer mentoring program, graduate writing program and professional development workshops, among other services. Starting in fall 2019, the Office of Undergraduate Education is beginning an initiative to coordinate tutoring services to share best practices in training tutors.

First-year students interested in exploring academic options available at CU Boulder, along with incoming first-year students who were not admitted directly to one of the limited-enrollment programs (e.g., engineering, business or environmental design), are admitted to the new **Program in Exploratory Studies** (PES), which is home to 25% of new first-year students. Students work with academic advisors and coaches to explore their academic options or to pursue admission to one of the more competitive academic programs. The Division of Continuing Education provides advising support to nondegree students who have enrolled in CU Boulder courses through the **ACCESS program**, either for personal/professional development or to explore applying for admission to degree programs.

**Placement assessments** in math, chemistry and languages direct incoming students to appropriate courses, and **transfer credit evaluation** (see 4.A.2. and 4.A.3.) assesses equivalency of prior learning so that students can enroll in appropriate course levels.

CU Boulder is in the second year of a two-year pilot program using predictive analytics to identify at-risk students (now referred to as high-priority students) to target interventions to those students. The pilot program is focused on students in CEAS and PES. If successful and provided campus funding, this program will be expanded to all undergraduate students in fall 2020. The pilot is also testing the ability of predictive analytics to assess the impact or retention “lift” of individual student success programs.

3.D.3. Advising programs and services for undergraduate students are primarily housed in colleges and schools; exceptions include the **University Exploration & Advising Center**, which serves students in PES who have not yet affiliated with a college/school, and **advising services in Continuing Education**. Students are typically assigned to an advisor based on major, and advisors work closely with academic departments to remain abreast of curricular changes.

Two of CU Boulder’s strategic initiatives, **Academic Futures** and **Foundations of Excellence** (see 1.A.3.), identified unintended inefficiencies, inequities and barriers for students that result from this decentralized advising model and recommended that additional coordination is needed. Efforts to centralize aspects of the advising model are underway, coordinated by the Office of Undergraduate Education. For example, each advising program is adopting a **common core set of four student learning outcomes** for advising, in which students (1) experience a sense of psychosocial belonging; (2) develop a
growth mindset; (3) engage in optimizing their degree planning process; and (4) engage in a process of career/life planning. These learning outcomes will give more specific and comparable grounds to all advising programs for assessment of advising, which to this point has primarily been in the form of student satisfaction surveys. Other reforms recommended by the Foundations of Excellence strategic initiative including reducing advisor caseloads and requiring advising in each of the first four semesters. A project to add a significant number of new advising lines to move toward the committee’s recommended advisor/student ratio has been funded through the Financial Futures strategic initiative.

Academic advising for graduate students is provided by the individual degree programs and is usually conducted by a unit’s director of graduate studies, a designated graduate advising committee, and/or the student’s thesis/dissertation director. The Graduate School provides resources on effective mentorship to both faculty and graduate students. Graduate advising is assessed through the campus program review (ARPAC) process, discussed in 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.

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

Campus-wide support for effective teaching has historically been centered in the Faculty Teaching Excellence Program (FTEP) and the Graduate Teacher Program (GTP), along with, for the relevant disciplines, the Center for STEM Learning (CSL) and the Arts and Sciences Support of Education Through Technology (ASSETT) program. A review of these four programs by the ARPAC (program review) committee (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.)—following on and reinforced by the recommendations of a provost-level Teaching and Learning-Center Committee as well as of the Foundations of Excellence and Academic Futures strategic initiatives—resulted in the former FTEP and GTEP being united under the banner of the new Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), whose founding director was appointed in July 2019. CTL will organize teaching development opportunities for all instructional faculty and graduate students on campus, and has been tasked by the provost with building formal and informal alliances among other groups on campus that support teaching innovation and improvement. These include not only CSL and ASSETT but also the Discipline Based Education Research seminar series and the Learning Assistant Program, among others.

The physical and research-collection infrastructure for teaching and learning is reviewed through ARPAC in the same process used for degree programs (see 3.A.1. and 3.A.2.), with recommendations then made to the university for improvement. Units reviewed include those that support teaching and learning even if they do not offer degree programs of their own, such as research institutes. The ARPAC process ensures that teaching and learning infrastructure—including the University Libraries; the Museum of Natural History; the CU Art Museum; the Sommers-Bausch Observatory; performance and studio spaces in the College of Music and the Departments of Art and Art History and Theatre and Dance; lab spaces for the degree programs and research institutes; instructional spaces such as the Anderson Language and Technology Center; and spaces for clinical programs in the School of Law, School of Education, and departments of Psychology (for clinical psychology) and Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences—is reviewed and assessed for how it is meeting the needs of both undergraduate and graduate teaching and learning. Examples of specific infrastructural improvements recently made as a result of ARPAC recommendations to the deans and provost include new, centralized animal facilities and increased coordination of research computing. Programs that participate in specialized accreditation also undergo
review of teaching and learning infrastructure according to the processes of the accrediting organization.

Teaching and learning infrastructure related to the needs of students with disabilities is provided by the Office of Disability Services. The need for a central accommodated testing center has become increasingly apparent across a number of reviews of academic and student support programs, and this center will open in the new Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE) building in AY 2020–21. Campus information technology related to teaching and learning is centered in the Office of Information Technology, which is reviewed and improved through the strategic planning process described in 5.A.1.

3.D.5. The University Libraries provide widely used instruction in the effective use of research and information sources (see 2.E.2.), as well as research guides in specific disciplines and research assistance both in person and via online chat. Individual degree programs require courses emphasizing research specific to the discipline(s) involved in that program. Further development of research and information-use skills is afforded through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, the Biological Sciences Initiative in undergraduate research and the Discovery Learning apprenticeship program in engineering. Graduate students are trained in the effective use of research and information sources as an integral part of their completion of degree requirements.

3.E. The institution fulfills the claims it makes for an enriched educational environment.

1. Co-curricular programs are suited to the institution’s mission and contribute to the educational experience of its students.
2. The institution demonstrates any claims it makes about contributions to its students’ educational experience by virtue of aspects of its mission, such as research, community engagement, service learning, religious or spiritual purpose and economic development.

3.E.1. Broadly defined, CU Boulder has three forms of co-curricular programs: academically organized programs, student-led programs and independent groups. Each category of program organically and significantly enhances the students’ education and relationship to the community.

Academically organized student co-curricular programs exist both on the departmental level and within Academic Affairs. Departmental programs are numerous and are largely thematically focused, such as the English department’s 18th- and 19th-Century Studies Network or the Department of Communication’s Center for Communication and Democratic Engagement. Offices within Academic Affairs house a number of programs. In addition to programs sponsored by ODECE and the Office of Undergraduate Education (see 3.B.4.), the Division of Student Affairs organizes a number of co-curricular activities around cultural diversity and student support.

The funding model for and the sheer number of student-led programs set CU Boulder apart. The CU Student Government (CUSG) oversees student-led co-curricular activities through its own budget, which allocates approximately $24 million per year derived from student fees with the guidance of the Center for Student Involvement. The 500 separate programs under CUSG span everything from A Show of Hands, a club for ASL and Deaf Culture, to recreational sports to the Water Resources Book Club. One example of the ways these clubs operate as an organic part of the institution is CU International, a club
that brings together international students in a community through a weekly coffee hour, international food celebrations and other student-imagined and -implemented events. Because it is closely connected with the offices of Education Abroad and International Student and Scholar Services, CU International enables information and ideas to flow both formally and informally between the students and the institution. In this way, CU Boulder is able to promote a free, student-led experience that is not separate from its institutional mission.

Finally, independent student organizations serve a very important co-curricular role at CU Boulder. One recent example is BuffsUnited, which developed during 2017, as campuses across the U.S. were enmeshed in civil disobedience surrounding a speaking tour by Milo Yiannopoulos. The CU College Republicans, one of the student-led groups mentioned above, invited Yiannopoulos to campus. BuffsUnited sprang up independently to offer an alternative event for different voices. The two events were held simultaneously and peacefully on the CU Boulder campus, demonstrating clearly CU Boulder’s commitments to inclusivity and freedom of expression.

3.E.2. CU Boulder demonstrates its claims to contributing positively to its students’ educational experience in many ways, especially through its excellent faculty, who own CU Boulder’s curriculum and program oversight. Other indices include:

- Data gathered and analyzed by the Office of Data Analytics, which makes available to both the university and the public analytic tools for CU Boulder’s understanding of itself—for example, undergraduate retention and graduation metrics, and faculty, staff and student survey data (see 4.C.2.)—and which is developing Analytics360, an integrated platform that promises to provide extensive ability to cross-reference these data sets intelligently.
- External ranking indexes such as U.S. News & World Report’s college and graduate program rankings, and the Academic Ranking of World Universities (the Shanghai Ranking).
- Reports maintained by the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, which oversees the university’s honor code along with restorative justice and conflict resolution programs (see 2.E.1.).
- Analysis and reporting conducted by the Research & Innovation Office, which measures and monitors research development, contracts and grants, the economic impact of CU Boulder research, and compliance in research matters.
- The work of the Office for Outreach and Engagement, whose Civic Action Plan and list of campus programs register the university’s commitment to civic action through public discussion and civic engagement.
- The work of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC), whose reviews and assessments of the university’s academic and academic-support units are publicly available.

These multiple measures of student educational experience and societal impact provide the university with strong evidence of its performance in research, community engagement, service learning and economic development.

3. Summary. As one of only 34 U.S. public universities in the Association of American Universities (AAU), CU Boulder is dedicated to realizing the positive impacts of new knowledge. CU Boulder’s core mission is to educate students and engage in cutting-edge scholarship and creative work, research and discovery. The success with which we carry out this mission determines our ability to accomplish our strategic
imperatives to shape tomorrow’s leaders, be the top university for innovation and positively impact humanity. We take pride in helping our students, faculty, staff and partners turn new ideas into productive outcomes that change lives. We also take pride in educating undergraduate students to understand the breadth and diversity of human knowledge and human character. Both undergraduate and graduate students gain the knowledge and skills to contribute to their fields of academic and creative endeavor.

The faculty, staff, students and administration of CU Boulder recently reaffirmed the university’s focus on teaching and learning through the Academic Futures strategic initiative (see 1.A.3.), which reiterates CU Boulder’s commitment to the values of inclusive excellence, a student-centered campus and teaching excellence. Specific projects that are now being implemented because of Academic Futures, such as a new Center for Teaching and Learning (see 3.D.4., 4.B.1. and 4.B.3.), demonstrate that this commitment generates concrete action.

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