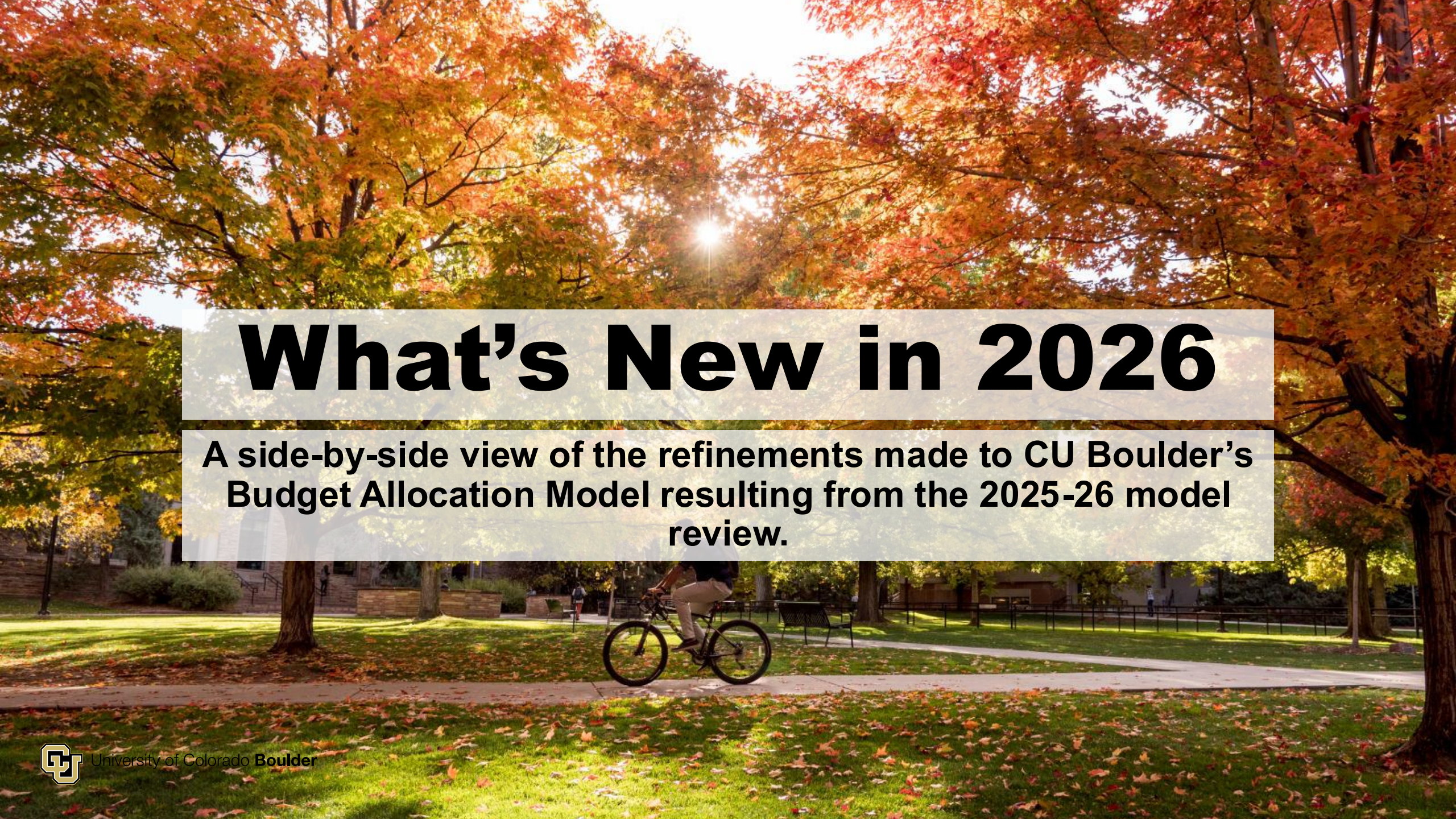




What's New in 2026

A side-by-side view of the refinements made to CU Boulder's Budget Allocation Model resulting from the 2025-26 model review.



Background

- In 2023, CU Boulder implemented a new, campuswide budget allocation model.
- Included in model design is a formal review, completed every 3-5 years, to ensure the model is working effectively and as intended.
- The first formal model design review was undertaken in AY 2025-26 and completed in June 2026.
- The review considered every component of the budget allocation model and determined whether the original design should be refined or maintained.
- Most components of the model were recommended to be maintained, while some design components were recommended for refinement.

The following slides provide a side-by-side of the refinements resulting from the 2026 review compared to 2023 original design. Components maintained from the original design are not included in this document.

For a full view of the budget model, check out the [Interactive Flowchart](#).



Strategic Fund

Original Design

The amount of the Strategic Fund is determined as a dollar amount annually based on campus revenues and strategic priorities.

Impact: unpredictable year to year; hard to plan for and understand how funds are used.

Refinement

Establish a multi-year planned dollar amount and annual reporting process.

The new planned amount will be maintained through the next formal Budget Model Design Review.

Impact: increases predictability and transparency.



Support Unit Qualitative Funds

Original Design

Similar to the Comprehensive Fund, this fund **provides a qualitative funding structure** for support units.

In 2025, the original four pools were collapsed into a single pool distributed at the discretion of the Chancellor with input from his executive leadership committee.

Impact: no clear process to distribute additional revenue or to assign reductions if revenue declines.

Refinement

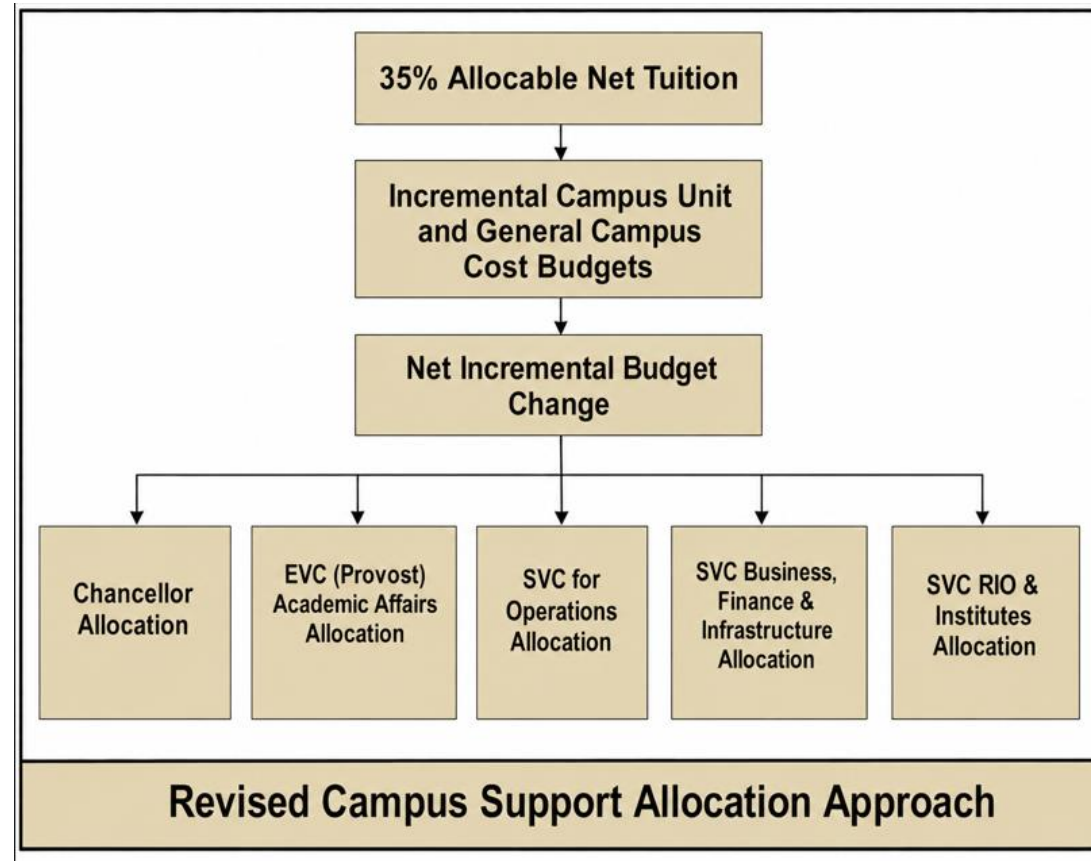
Recalculate qualitative support unit funds into five pools aligned with campus leadership structure.

Provide annual executive review of proportional allocations/reductions.

Impact: acknowledges the important decision-making role support unit leaders have in strategically allocating resources in their respective areas.



Support Unit Qualitative Funds



Comprehensive Fund

Original Design

Formerly named the “Supplemental” Fund. Provides a qualitative method for resource allocation, under the authority of the Provost, in addition to distributions via the model’s core allocations (quantitative formulas).

Impact: acknowledges that not all mission-critical activities at CU Boulder generate sufficient revenue to be self-supporting.

Refinement

Name change from "Supplemental" Fund to "Comprehensive" Funds.

Basis by which guardrails calculated to -3% of total general fund budget.

Enhance annual planning and reporting processes.

Impact: “Comprehensive” fund more accurately reflects the purpose served by the fund; the revised guardrail provides more closely reflects activity; enhanced planning and reporting increases transparency.



Faculty Actions

Original Design

Faculty Actions is a centrally-held fund under the authority of the Provost that funds Promotion & Tenure, faculty retention actions, and other strategic faculty investments.

Impact: withholding mechanism complex and creates administrative burden, and grows over time.

Refinement

Remove Promotion & Tenure budget from the Faculty Actions pool and flow commensurate funding through core allocations.

Maintain a smaller pool for faculty retention actions and strategic faculty investments.

Impact: aligns with other required compensation actions; reduces administrative complexity and tracking requirements.



Graduate Non-Resident Tuition Remission

Original Design

Tuition remission is defined as the waiver of all or part of tuition for graduate students on appointment (teaching, research, etc.)

100% of the non-resident tuition remission differential budget is booked against traditional graduate tuition revenue.

Impact: constrains traditional graduate revenue and assumes the expense is in direct support of graduate student instructional activity.

Refinement

Allocate non-resident tuition remission proportionately across undergraduate and graduate tuition revenue - approximately 92% undergraduate / 8% graduate.

Recalculate annually; preserve the overall campus allocation relationship (65/35 split between Schools & Colleges and Support units)

Impact: more accurately reflects the direct impact graduate students have in supporting instructional activity within undergraduate education.



Differential Tuition Weighting

Original Design

Differential tuition weights are based on established tuition tiers and updated during formal Budget Allocation Model Design Reviews.

Impact: accounts for differences in tuition tiers but is fixed for 3-5 years

Refinement

Recalculate differential tuition rates annually.

Impact: more accurately reflect and account for tuition changes taking place between formal model reviews.



Graduation Incentive

Original Design

A portion of a school or college's core funds allocation is based on the number of students graduating from their programs based on a six-year graduation standard.

Students are counted as 1.0; "credit" goes to the student's primary College of Record.

Impact: in the case of double majors, does not capture the support provided by the "secondary" school, college, or division.

Refinement

Count multiple cross-college/school and cross-divisional majors as 1.0 each.

Impact: dilutes the incentive pool but more accurately apportions the incentive funds to all of a student's colleges, schools and divisions. Methodology aligned with College of Record design.



Timing of Drivers & Revenue Projections

Original Design

Revenue allocations are based on projected tuition revenue and historical enrollment drivers using census-based calendar year data.

Impact: does not recognize programs operating on non-traditional academic terms.

Refinement

Use end-of-term data where feasible while maintaining overall methodology.

Impact: better captures programs with rolling admissions and varying academic calendars.



College of Instruction (COI) Assignment Methodology

Original Design

This refers to how “credit” is assigned to the college of instruction in the allocation methodology.

College of Instruction credit is assigned to the “tenure home” or school or college top appointment for the faculty member at a single point in time.

Impact: does not accurately reflect term based positions such as temporary faculty (Lecturers & Instructional Associates).

Refinement

Establish a simplified “waterfall” methodology.

Assign Lecturers and Instructional Associates by course prefix use roster-home assignments for tenure-track and teaching faculty.

Impact: more accurately assigns student credit hours instructed by faculty appointed on a course by course basis.



Pre-licensure Weighting in College of Record (COR)

Original Design

Colleges and schools receive funding per each major with a count of 1.00 in the College of Record assignment.

Pre-licensure programs count the same as minors; at 0.25 in College of Record methodology.

Impact: revenue allocation for pre-licensure programs does not align with student credit hour program expectations and administrative support provided.

Refinement

Pre-licensure program enrollments count as 1.0, the same as majors in the College of Record assignment.

Impact: improves alignment of College of Record funding to the support offered to pre-licensure students by colleges and schools.

