



University of Colorado **Boulder**

2015 Program Review

Division of Continuing Education and  
Professional Studies

Academic Review and Planning Advisory  
Committee Final Report

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul A. Mead".

12/14/2015

Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs : Date

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## Process Overview

The review of the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DCE) was conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth in the document guiding the 2015 review cycle. Self-study responses were prepared by the unit and reviewed by an internal review committee (IRC), which found that the report was complete and certified that the unit had adequately responded to the mandatory questions on diversity, assessment, and mentoring and had supplied a copy of the unit's bylaws. An external review committee (ERC) visited the unit during April 2015, reviewed the relevant documents, and then met with faculty, staff, students, and university administrators. The reviewers' comments and recommendations are cited at appropriate points. This public document reflects the assessment of, and recommendations for, the DCE as approved by the members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC).

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## Unit Overview

The campus's standardized description of the unit may be found on the website of the Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis (PBA) (<http://www.colorado.edu/pba/depts/arp/index.html>). PBA updates the profile annually in the fall semester.

The Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DCE) celebrated its centenary in 2012. Formed by a committee of faculty, administrators, and local high school teachers, what was known as the "Extension Department" was one of the first occupants of Macky Auditorium. Over the last century it has offered a variety of academic opportunities beyond the main campus, including summer, evening, home reading, and in recent years, online courses. In 1938 it created the Denver Extension Center, which in turn became the University of Colorado at Denver in 1972. For over 100 years it has extended the Boulder campus's offerings to a diverse community of learners.

DCE is organized into four administrative units that offer 10 academic and community outreach programs. Resulting from the 1996 Academic Affairs Strategic Plan, DCE became the administrative home for Summer Session, and in 2009 the Office for Outreach and Engagement became part of the division. DCE is led by a dean who reports to the provost. (In addition, the dean carries the title of vice provost for Summer Session, Outreach and Engagement.) Over the course of the 2015 program review cycle, the presiding dean retired after 26 years in the position, and a CU Boulder alumna assumed the position shortly before the beginning of the Fall 2015 semester and this committee's work.

According to the self-study, DCE employs ~52 FTE, primarily university and classified staff members, led by seven directors and two assistant deans. Tenured and tenure-track faculty (TTT) rostered in schools and colleges offer courses through DCE, which also directly employs lecturers and instructors, all of whom are vetted by the departments through which their courses are offered. 2014 PBA data shows 47 university and classified staff members, 76.6% women and 19.1% members of underrepresented groups; and 163 faculty members (primarily adjunct lecturer appointments), 57.5% of whom are women and 8.6% members of underrepresented groups.

### Overview: Continuing Education

The Continuing Education arm of DCE is a self-funded ("auxiliary") unit that has generated \$49.5 million in revenue over the last 10 years, with \$24 million being provided to the Office of the Provost during that time. Continuing Education strategically manages 15% of

its annual net revenue for program development purposes and provides funds to support other DCE programs.

Continuing Education's programs and administrative services include the following:

- Evening Credit, which offers ~75 hybrid (combining in-person and online) credit courses in 24 disciplines with an annual enrollment of ~3,200;
- Online Credit, which offers ~135 courses per semester enrolling ~7,500 students in 25 disciplines;
- Available Credit Courses for Eligible Special Students (ACCESS), which allows non-degree students to enroll in "main campus" courses;
- The International English Center (IEC), which enrolls 500 students in a variety of English as a Second Language programs;
- Science Discovery, which serves over 20,000 K-12 students, teachers, and other members of the community per year;
- Extraordinary, which assists departments in building customized courses for specific communities;
- A post-baccalaureate medical professions program; and
- Student services that provide academic, career, and financial aid counselling to DCE and main campus students.

Continuing Education also manages its own operations and financial services units and, notably, its own marketing. It also provides administrative support to campus entities such as Be Boulder Anywhere and the Evening MBA program.

According to the self-study, Continuing Education "nondegree students are older, more diverse and maintain slightly higher GPAs than CU-Boulder 'main campus' students." Science Discovery, the IEC, and other efforts in the division also appear to be engaged in significant initiatives that increase the diversity of the campus community.

Overview: Summer Session

Summer Session is a campus-funded activity administered by DCE, and a net revenue generator for the campus. Offering courses in five different summer terms, it enrolled 8,000 students in 42,363 student-credit-hours (SCH) in 2014, grossing \$27.5 million, with \$5.2 million transferred directly to schools and colleges under an incentive program created in 2009. Juniors and seniors comprise most of Summer Session's enrollment, many of whom take courses to stay on track in their degree programs.

Summer Session also offers an instructional grant program that assists faculty in curricular innovation and Faculty-in-Residence-for-Summer-Term (FIRST), which attracts faculty from other campuses to teach a summer course at CU Boulder. Administrative decisions for Summer Session lay primarily in DCE, while academic decisions lay primarily in the schools and colleges. This model is the result of collaborations between DCE and academic departments, including a committee of Summer Session deans and a Summer Session Enrollment Strategy Subcommittee (SSESS), all of which have helped Summer Session grow its enrollment and services significantly in recent years.

Overview: Office for Outreach and Engagement (OOE)

According to the unit's self-study, the OOE "facilitates and connects internal and external partnerships among faculty, students and communities; initiates new opportunities and communication tools; and generally supports collaborations that embed outreach and engagement within the academic role and mission of the university." It is funded by revenue generated by DCE with additional support from the provost's and chancellor's offices. The office also offers outreach and engagement awards that "extend faculty members' research, teaching and creative work through mutually beneficial partnerships with external constituents," totaling ~\$360,000 for ~40 projects per year. It also supports Community Programs that reach over 360,000 Coloradoans annually, including CU on the Weekend, which offers "mini-classes" that are free and open to the public, and CU in the Community, which offers similar programs across the state.

## Past Reviews

DCE underwent program review in 1996 and 2003. Key recommendations from 1996, such as including the DCE dean on the council of deans and the consolidation of campus outreach activities in DCE, were implemented. 2003 recommendations were also largely addressed, including equitable salary for faculty teaching in DCE programs. The 2015 ERC noted that 2003 recommendations were “successfully addressed.”

## Campus Context

Almost all of DCE's mission involves significant relationships with other campus entities. Courses offered through Evening- and Online Credit, as well as Summer Session, are either taught by tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty with tenure homes in academic departments or by adjunct faculty who, in addition to the courses themselves, are vetted by appropriate TTT faculty. The Office for Outreach and Engagement promotes and incentivizes faculty research and service activities that engage the broader community. The International English Center and Available Credit Courses for Eligible Special Students (ACCESS) program help provide bridges to degree programs, and Science Discovery leverages campus experts to provide K-12 learning opportunities. CU Complete works intensively with students and departments in a "concierge" model, developing tailored pathways to graduation for, primarily, working professionals (140 students since 2009). And CU Promise provides ten semesters of guaranteed financial support for students who are Colorado residents from low-income families (4,000 in 2013). According to the self-study, 49% of 2014 graduates of bachelor's programs had taken at least one course through DCE. These programs are highly integrated into academic units and strongly support efforts to enhance student success and persistence.

In addition, DCE provides support for other campus units. Its advising unit is available to students across campus, and instructional design assistance is provided to faculty members interested in teaching online and hybrid courses. (This service is also provided by other units on campus, such as the Office of Information Technology). The division also funds appointments in other units with similar missions, such as graduate part time instructors (GPTI) in the School of Education and Department of English, and an instructor line in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric.

DCE has also spearheaded the creation of a new Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE), a planned 110,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility that will house three DCE programs, as well as admissions and advising, and thereby, according to the self-study, "serve as a gateway building to centralize essential academic services for various constituencies and campus groups." Funding for CASE is in place and construction awaits approval of the University of Colorado Board of Regents.

DCE courses also serve a comparatively diverse student body; according to the self-study, ~27% of DCE enrollments are non-degree

seeking students, 28% of whom are non-white and 52% of whom are women.

DCE is now working with Be Boulder Anywhere to continue developing campus online and distance education offerings. This effort is the only campus program that offers degrees in a fully online/distant format. Five Masters of Science and/or Masters of Engineering degrees are offered, as well as over a dozen graduate certificates in engineering and one in environmental studies.

## Disciplinary Context

Universities have adopted a variety of models to offer continuing education, the most dynamic of which currently involve online, evening and/or weekend, and distance learning programs. DCE has long been critical to campus efforts in these arenas. At times this has taken the form of assuming administrative assistance to programs such as the Center for Advanced Engineering and Technology Education (CAETE), now transitioning to Be Boulder Anywhere. But the division has also worked with schools and colleges to offer online courses distinct from this effort, branded Online Credit for courses offered during the academic year, and Summer Session Online for summer terms.

The self-study cites data quantifying national growth in online education, a trend the division has also experienced: enrollment in Online Credit courses has increased 70% since 2002. In the Summer Session Online program, three courses were offered in 2009, and 50 in 2014. Online Credit now provides approximately 135 for-credit courses per semester representing approximately 25 CU-Boulder disciplines and even funds GTPI positions in as many as six departments.

Organizational models for continuing education and outreach vary widely across the nation, but DCE is unique in that it also oversees the Office of Outreach and Engagement, and exceptional in that it runs its own marketing operation.

## Analysis

By all accounts, DCE is an adaptive and effective operation. The ERC wrote it is “exceptionally well-managed” and “highly successful,” and the IRC that is “an excellent, well-functioning unit.” Both reports note effective, value-driven, and transparent leadership in the division and an associated commitment from its employees. Leadership and engagement are evident in a unit that is able to collaborate with a variety departments and units across the campus and quickly adapt to evolving needs of students and faculty.

Examples of those qualities in DCE are evident throughout the self-study and review committee reports: a transparent budget hearing process led by the dean; very notable overall increases in Summer Session Online enrollment, as well as shifts from self-paced to term-based enrollment patterns; innovative collaborations such as the Faculty in Residence Summer Term (FIRST) program and incentives for faculty to teach in summer terms; high enrollment in outreach programs across the state; and significant revenue that is strategically managed for the overall good of the unit and the academic mission of the campus. An example of how this revenue is re-invested is the forthcoming Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE) building, which will centralize some DCE programs and related efforts across campus.

With the appointment of a new dean, the division is well poised to leverage its strengths and both adapt to and provide leadership for critical initiatives in education. These include a developing but somewhat unclear relationship with Be Boulder Anywhere, an increase in international student enrollment, and national trends in online and distance education toward which the Boulder campus must strategically position itself. ARPAC feels the campus should rely heavily on DCE for vision and implementation in all these areas.

ARPAC appreciates DCE’s ability to serve a student body that is more diverse, on average, than “main campus” students. The division is a campus strength in this regard. DCE also employs more women and members of minority groups as a percentage of overall staff than the campus as a whole, and more women faculty are involved in DCE courses relative to the campus (57.7% in DCE, 40.2% campus-wide). There does appear to be room for improvement in numbers of faculty from underrepresented groups teaching in the division: 8.6% of its 2014 adjunct faculty identify as members of minority groups, whereas the campus as a whole shows 13.9%. Given that 28% of non-degree-seeking DCE students are members of these groups, ARPAC

notes the relative lack of proportional diversity in faculty teaching DCE courses. Given the temporary nature of adjunct appointments in these courses, these data may change annually; and given that DCE is not in full command of who teaches in its programs, ARPAC understands the challenge faced by the division in this respect. But it may be that DCE needs to develop a plan to recruit a more diverse faculty for the division.<sup>1</sup>

#### Analysis: Continuing Education

The nimble, highly collaborative, and mission-driven approach of Continuing Education within DCE has clearly met student needs by offering a variety of evening and online courses since the last program review. This approach has also benefited non-credit, community-targeted programs, such as Science Discovery. The fact that almost half of 2014 graduates had enrolled in at least one DCE course during their studies; that 2014 enrollments across the division were ~19,000 (generating ~57,000 SCH); and that Science Discovery programs are attended by ~20,000 K-12 students, teachers, and community member each year; these data speak to the demand for education in these areas.

The majority of enrollment increases over the last decade have been in online courses. Net revenue increases in Online Credit have been remarkable, up ~500% since 2002, to over \$2.7 million in 2014. There is evident need for this type of content delivery, and Continuing Education has developed the campus partnerships to meet that need with offerings that appear to match the quality expected of the Boulder campus.

These are but recent examples of a division that has played a leadership role in expanding Boulder campus offerings through innovation for decades, including online course delivery. The division provides valuable expertise in managing non-matriculated students and educational technology, works closely with academic departments to ensure quality of content and delivery, and does so in economically sustainable ways. The division is a significant asset to the campus, and its work shows potential for expansion.

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic data provided by PBA:

<http://www.colorado.edu/pba/facstaff/catdivsc2014.htm#CE>.

Examples of expansion opportunities include the possibility of offering certificate programs for non-matriculated students and professional masters, at least in part online, and fully online completion pathways for students who are a few courses shy of their

degrees. These efforts would support campus priorities in student success and revenue generation.

The unit does face challenges, however, in any efforts it may undertake in the future. Some lack of clarity from the campus, and the system, with respect to the university's overall direction in online education, as well as skepticism among some faculty members about the value of online course delivery appear to present difficulties for the unit. In addition, the creation of Be Boulder Anywhere seems to have thus far confused existing—and successful—efforts in Continuing Education (and in Summer Session for that matter). It is critical that the Boulder campus strategically position itself in online and hybrid education; that requisite academic oversight and policies be adopted; and that all this be done in ways that do not weaken DCE programs. ARPAC believes that Continuing Education should play a pivotal role in the development of Be Boulder Anywhere and a campus strategy and vision for online education. ARPAC urges the provost to work with relevant stakeholders toward a clarification of roles and a common focus on the student success and revenue generation potential in all these and related initiatives.

The self-study presents several ways in which the unit promotes a “culture of continuous quality improvement” in online education, many of which involve best-practices established nationally. It may benefit the unit's attempts to overcome skepticism about online education to include learning outcomes data for CU students enrolled in online courses—or at the very least, faculty-course questionnaire results. It may be these data are leveraged in other contexts appropriately, but their inclusion in the program review process as it continues may prove useful.

Another area Continuing Education may expand is in partnering with academic units to offer more post-baccalaureate professional development courses in any format. Opportunities exist not only in the Boulder area, but also through CU South Denver. This location currently offers a Masters of Business Administration through the Leeds School of Business and streams online lectures of a non-credit “Mini Law School” from Boulder. Similar programs, whether for credit or not-for-credit, in a variety of technical areas, could leverage DCE and faculty expertise and ultimately, according the ERC report, drive “community awareness, alumni engagement, donor cultivation, and a deeper appreciation of what the University is about.” Other areas for expanded efforts include the International English Center

(IEC) working with the Available Credit Courses for Eligible Special Students (ACCESS) program to provide a program that combines campus courses with IEC courses. Again, learning outcomes assessments will be critical to conversations regarding expanded programs.

The ERC report also notes that the marketing operation in DCE is “lean” and recommends ways that the division could investigate whether or not it should be expanded. By tying marketing into strategic goals for the unit (e.g., reaching new audiences in CU South Denver), DCE could make the case for the allocation of appropriate levels of resources. The report also notes that some marketing is developed independently by individual programs (Science Discovery and the IEC conduct their own marketing, for example) and that it could potentially be centralized.

Finally, Continuing Education provides student advising that must be commended. The ERC report expresses it best:

Perhaps the most important factor in student success is what we heard from students about the skill, thoughtfulness and sensitivity of [Continuing Education] advisors. Student stories were moving; e.g., one person described being “saved” from leaving school altogether by an academic advisor who “helped me create a successful strategy and a pathway to my degree.” A working professional who dropped out after struggling in her first year of campus classes also credited a [Continuing Education] advisor who helped her back into a degree program through [Continuing Education] smaller, more engaged courses. She told us she had “graduated with honors and now I have a great job and I’m back taking professional development courses through Continuing Education.”

ARPAC believes that advising, as well as the transparent leadership and business models embodied in the unit, are successful models for other operational and administrative efforts in these areas across campus.

Analysis: Summer Session

Sharp enrollment increases in Summer Session during recent years have been enabled in part by a departmental incentive program created in 2009. Under this plan, academic units receive 80% of incentive fund revenue if specified overall revenue and SCH goals are met. Enrollment has also increased due to Summer Session Online offerings being increased (partially as a result of incentive program

itself), and more recently, to the beginning of implementation of recommendations from a Summer Session Enrollment Strategy Committee. These recommendations include increased financial aid, conditional admissions for transfer students, and the introduction of Augmester, an intensive, one-month, one-course term. As noted, Summer Session generates significant revenue for the campus, and the budget, which is managed independently of continuing education, appears to be well-managed.

The unit plans on expanding Summer Session Online and has in place a considered strategy for doing so as it continues to develop relationships with Be Boulder Anywhere. ARPAC agrees this is the correct path forward given the existing situation but encourages campus leadership to clarify stakeholder roles in online education relying heavily on the division's expertise.

Analysis: Office of Outreach and Engagement

Efforts undertaken by the Office of Outreach and Engagement (OOE) appear to be well in line with campus priorities, particularly that of enhancing the reputation of the university across the state. The self-study provides documentation on how OOE programs are assessed, including attendance at CU on the Weekend and CU in the Community and interviews with involved faculty members. The ERC notes that OOE efforts "represent CU-Boulder well in communities across the State and represent models for effective community engagement at other universities." The report specifically mentions that OOE maintains a "database of faculty outreach and engagement efforts" and considers it, along with other OOE efforts, "highly valuable campus resources that are often not included in the outreach and engagement offices at other universities." The ERC also notes that while housing an outreach arm within an organization such as DCE is unique, it appears to be working "very well." By its very nature, the OOE diversifies the campus community, particularly geographically in a statewide context.

Some events at CU South Denver could potentially be organized, at least in part, by OOE. Receptions and fundraisers associated with lectures and symposia offered by campus faculty are potential activities suggested by the ERC.

In short, the DCE is a model organization for similar efforts in the system and at peer institutions across the nation. It is highly integrated across the campus, effective and adaptive in its efforts, and offers high-quality programs that are efficiently managed.

ARPAC commends the work of all staff and faculty in the DCE, as well as those with whom it partners.

## Recommendations

The members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC) address the following recommendations to the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies, and to the offices of the provost and chancellor. It is the committee's intention that the recommendations serve to benefit program improvement and development and to further the mission of the University of Colorado Boulder.

### To the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DCE)

1. Work with academic units and campus administration to explore expanding certificate programs, especially at the graduate level, as well as degree completion pathways, both online and in-person;
2. Maintain and leverage the strengths of the division at a time of leadership transition. These include working in integrated fashion with academic units, transparency and strategy in budgeting and revenue generation, and alignment with campus priorities;
3. Continue to embrace, champion, and provide support for online education efforts across the campus. As a part of this effort, develop and/or provide learning outcomes or other appropriate assessment data;
4. Explore enhancing and/or centralizing marketing across the division;
5. Explore opportunities to develop programs at CU South Denver as appropriate;
6. Explore structured ways of offering IEC and ACCESS courses concurrently, as a bridge to degree programs for speakers of English as a second language;
7. Plan to increase and/or maintain diversity among faculty members involved in DCE programs. As a part of this effort, deliberately seek faculty members from underrepresented groups to teach DCE courses. Use DCE programs to improve access for non-traditional students.

### To the provost

1. Grant control of certificate programs for non-matriculated students to DCE;

2. Clarify DCE's important role in online education and its structural relationship to Be Boulder Anywhere;
3. Provide funds derived from revenue generated by the division to assist in the development of appropriate learning assessment data in online education;
4. Encourage deans to work with department chairs on developing professional masters and certificate programs for which there is market demand. Some of these programs, in particular certificates, could potentially be administered by DCE. As a part of this effort, make existing revenue incentives clear to departments, and consider enhancing them. Encourage DCE to find ways to use online programs to create degree completion programs;
5. Explore whether and how DCE advising approaches, in particular to non-traditional students, could be adapted for use in schools and colleges.

To the chancellor

1. Work with DCE and other appropriate units to ensure that construction of the Center for Academic Success and Engagement (CASE) building is completed in a timely manner.

## Required Follow-Up

The dean of the Division of Continuing Education and vice provost for Summer Session shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2017, 2018, and 2019) to the provost on the implementation of review recommendations. The provost, as part of the review reforms, has agreed to respond annually to all outstanding matters under her/his purview arising from this review year. All official responses will be posted online.