

**Annual Academic Planning Report  
Academic Affairs  
University of Colorado at Boulder**

**April 11, 2008**

The planning that is necessary to deliver the academic mission of the University of Colorado at Boulder is a combination of program review and planning, budget planning and long-run strategic planning. A great deal of attention is paid to all three activities and to try to coordinate the results. Academic program review and planning is in a transition to a new process and will formally begin this process in September 2008. The budget planning process in Academic Affairs and for the campus has evolved over the past few years to a state where campus input into budget decisions are now routinely collected and integrated into the budget implementation process for both temporary and continuing fund allocations. Finally, under the Leadership of Chancellor Peterson, the long-run strategic planning opportunities offered by the Flagship 2030 initiative are being successfully initiated.

**Flagship 2030**

The *Flagship 2030* strategic plan will serve as a long-term model for CU-Boulder to become the "new flagship university" of the 21st century. The plan will position the university for global leadership in education, research, and creative works by the year 2030. *Flagship 2030* offers both short- and long-term directions for transforming the University of Colorado at Boulder into a leading model for the "new flagship university" of the 21st century. Led by Chancellor G.P. "Bud" Peterson, our strategic planning effort reflects the input of hundreds of faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni, business leaders, community members, government officials, and other university stakeholders. *Flagship 2030* requires a two-pronged approach to investment and decision-making. First, we must focus on near-term needs to sustain quality and remain competitive in our core service areas, and second, we must implement aggressive, far-reaching "flagship initiatives" for transforming the university. Moving the university forward through these important initiatives will depend on the availability of resources.

On November 29, 2007, the University Of Colorado Board Of Regents approved the Boulder campus' Flagship 2030 Strategic Plan. In the next stage of *Flagship 2030*, detailed action plans will be developed for the core and flagship initiatives. Provost Phil DiStefano and Senior Vice Chancellor Ric Porreca, with the help of Boulder Faculty Assembly chair Uriel Nauenberg, have formed nine task forces to develop plans to implement these initiatives. The task forces are: Faculty,

Research, Graduate Education, Undergraduate Education, Enrollment, Facilities, Budget, Staffing/Operations, and Outreach. A faculty member is chair or co-chair of each task force, and five of the nine task forces have an academic affairs focus. Action plans will be drafted and proposed by the various task forces and planning groups for final review and approval by September 1, 2008. Regular reports and updates will be provided to the university community, the system administration, the CU Board of Regents, the local community, state leadership, alumni, donors, parents, and other stakeholders.

### **Accreditation**

During the 2009-2010 Academic Year, the University of Colorado at Boulder is scheduled to undergo a comprehensive evaluation review for continued accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). The evaluation visit by the Higher Learning Commission will take place on February 22 - 24, 2010. Provost Phil DiStefano and Senior Vice Chancellor Ric Porreca are co-chairing the accreditation process for CU-Boulder and will soon be establishing a steering committee to prepare the institutional self-study over the next 10 - 12 months.

### **Academic Program Review and Planning**

Over the past year, the Office of Faculty Affairs has worked to prepare the way for a transition in academic review procedures at CU-Boulder. This change—toward a more comprehensive planning and review process—follows the recommendation of a campus level faculty taskforce that concluded that the university needs to do a better job in thinking strategically about its priorities, and in connecting review recommendations with resources. A reordering of reviews (some 70 in total) has been initiated with the hope of tying reviews together organizationally and topically in strategic ways, so that the campus community might gain a clearer sense of institutional needs and opportunities. Procedures were also established to increase the efficiency of the self-studies, to distinguish between the tasks of the internal and external review committees, to tie program review to budget decisions, and to increase accountability. Preparations for the first of these aggregated reviews—for the arts and humanities—are currently underway, and the new review process will formally begin in September of 2008. Key campus constituencies, including among these the Academic Affairs Budget Advisory Committee, the Student Outcomes Assessment Committee, and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement, have been involved in discussing ways to optimize the new process

for campus planning needs. Their advice and participation has been requested on an ongoing basis.

### **Academic Rigor**

One primary mechanism for upholding and maintaining academic rigor on campus is through the campus assessment process. This assessment effort takes place on a unit by unit basis under the management of an Assessment Oversight Committee (AOC) that functions as a central coordinating, stimulating and encouragement group. Over the past 5 years, all campus units offering courses or degrees or providing academic programs (for example, the Program in Writing and Rhetoric) have been directly visited by two or more members of the AOC for the purpose of discussing each unit's current assessment practices and to offer guidance, assistance and encouragement in improving, enhancing and expanding, where needed, the perception of the potential value--to that unit--of time and effort expenditures necessary for effective academic assessment.

For the academic units, assessment efforts have been centered on the written knowledge and skill goals of each unit, published in our catalog <http://www.colorado.edu/catalog/catalog08-09/>. A principal aim has been to directly connect assessment strategies, methods, results and subsequent departmental actions to those articulated academic goals. This process helps to maintain and further academic rigor on campus. The Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis provides the most complete and detailed information available for the campus assessment efforts at <http://www.colorado.edu/pba/outcomes/>. This website contains unit reports, policies, committee minutes, tables of assessment methodologies used by various departments and much more information. PBA is also responsible for most campus-wide surveys such as the Senior Survey and detailed results are also available at <http://www.colorado.edu/pba>.

All of the schools and colleges are working on enhancing academic rigor in their units. Examples at the school and college level include the following:

The College of Engineering and Applied Science has developed a new Honors Program designed to attract and retain the best and brightest students, and provide faculty of the College the opportunity to work with these students. The Engineering Honors Program and its students helps distinguish the College for undergraduate academic excellence and the community of scholarship created by the program will provide a source of innovation that enriches the educational environment of the entire college.

The College of Arts and Sciences has issued the 'Colorado Challenge', an initiative that aims to specifically strengthen and enhance the intellectual rigor and value of the undergraduate A&S curriculum. The initiative is broad and encompasses many components but sample recommendations include:

- Encourage colleagues to enforce a "2 hours of homework per hour of class time" guideline.
- Encourage students to develop a "Learning Portfolio" to encourage focus on learning rather than grading, and use the portfolio as an entry ticket for thesis and honors programs.
- Evaluate course content to reduce repetition/redundancy of courses generally taken in sequence.

The College of Music has instituted a mandatory, graded course entitled Sophomore Proficiency which will guarantee all students have passed this important barrier to junior and senior level 3000/4000 performance levels. Music has also added new undergraduate courses in the Alexander Technique--which helps the College get in line with upcoming changes in requirements in the National Association of Schools of Music guidelines.

### **New Academic Initiatives**

The Colorado Initiative in Molecular Biotechnology (CIMB) and the CU Energy Initiative: Renewable and Sustainable Energy are important and on-going projects at the early stages of implementation. The Colleges of Arts and Sciences and Engineering and Applied Science are beginning the formulation of a Materials Science initiative. In addition, *Flagship 2030* will lead to several other initiatives that are only at the discussion stage currently.

### **Anticipated New Degree Requests and New Academic Programs**

The German Program in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures (GSSL) is proposing a new Ph.D. in German Studies that will build on the success of GSSL's existing German Studies M.A. degree. Students admitted to the Ph.D. program will engage in rigorous interdisciplinary study of the cultures, literatures, and thought of the German-speaking countries. This German Studies model, as distinct from traditional Germanics doctoral programs focusing only on literature and language, has succeeded in our undergraduate and M.A. programs and fits well with our current faculty strengths in German

philosophy, intellectual history, literature, culture, and politics from 1750 to the present. These strengths were built up from 1992 to the present using the German Studies model. While this model has been prevalent in the profession in the last decade, few German Ph.D. programs have revised their doctoral curriculum accordingly. Our German Studies focus will thus make our Ph.D. program unique, relevant, and competitive. In light of our strong faculty research profile relative to our AAU peers, we also expect to develop the Ph.D. into a nationally competitive program. Students completing their doctorate in German Studies will be competitive applicants for employment in academia, especially in light of the broader skill set now required of beginning assistant professors in our profession. They will also be highly qualified for employment in the teaching profession, in cultural institutions, and in business and government.

Other requests involve the following: Art and Art History degree programs and majors will be revised in order to align with current department name and practice; the formal separation of degree programs in atmospheric and oceanic sciences, and astrophysical and planetary sciences will be established; and the School of Law and the Department of Economics are collaborating in developing a new Program in Law and Economics.

### **Program and Degree Discontinuance**

The UCB Process for Academic Program Discontinuance is posted on the web site of the Office of Faculty Affairs. No programs were recommended for discontinuance during the 2007/2008 Academic Year.

Degree discontinuance is monitored by the Office of Planning Budget and Analysis and follows the procedures and practices of the Colorado Commission of Higher Education. No degrees have been discontinued since fall 2003. At this time the Research & Evaluation Methodology PhD Program, Classics PhD program and Italian BA degree are being monitored but none are planned for discontinuance.