

### **3.A - The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.**

#### **Assurance Evidence**

CSU carefully and deliberatively evaluates proposed degree programs to assure that they are appropriate to its mission and the standards of higher education. In addition, all current programs are periodically assessed to assure sustained quality through program reviews (discussed in detail in Component 4.A), and 34 degree programs regularly undergo external review for special accreditation (see Federal Compliance 4.0(i) for a detailed list). New degree program proposals are reviewed through a rigorous multi-phase process. After approval by Faculty Council, the proposal is sent to the Board for approval, and if approved, the proposal is submitted to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) for final approval. Programs in education must be submitted to the Colorado Department of Education as well. After state approval, the program may be advertised and recruiting for students may begin. An example of a new program planning proposal for the Master of Arts Leadership and Administration program is provided to illustrate details of the process.

The University's commitment to providing excellent programs is emphasized in Goal 5: Undergraduate Curricula and Goal 12: Ensure High-Quality Graduate Programs of the *Strategic Plan*.

#### **1. Courses and programs are current and require levels of performance by students appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded.**

CSU's *Curricular Policies and Procedures Handbook* contains the processes for course approval and modification of existing courses to ensure that the level of expected performance is appropriate for the credits and degree to be earned. Specific information requirements are identified to assist institutional review and approval for all course proposals, including specific learning objectives, methods of assessing student learning, teaching formats for delivery of the course, and credit hour policy compliance for contact hours and appropriate student-workload. Briefly, the rigorous review path for approval of all courses and degree programs is outlined in the routing path chart.

Qualified faculty members are assigned responsibility for each course by the home department or program and are expected to continuously review and improve courses. When changes are indicated, approval may be required at the department, college, University Curriculum Committee (UCC), and Faculty Council levels. The learning objectives for courses are established without regard to method of delivery to students. The UCC also conducts periodic reviews of course enrollment to determine those courses that have not been taught during the past three years. Departments are asked for a written justification for those that are to be retained but lack recent enrollment evidence. The UCC then acts to either retain or drop the courses under review.

Examples of curricular policy and procedure issues addressed by the UCC within the past year included: (1) review of HLC's Assumed Practices; (2) discussion of use of the term certificate as a designation for credit and noncredit packages of courses with a common emphasis; (3) development of a process and timeline for reviewing courses that were approved before the current definition of "essential course elements" was adopted; (4) review and clarification of the definition for courses that may be listed on program (departmental) course lists that guide students to completing degree requirements; (5) revision of minimum course requirements for graduate programs; and (6) drafting a "Definition of Instructional Format" policy that is consistent with the current federal definition for credit hours and method of course delivery. This proposed policy was subsequently adopted by the Faculty Council on November 6, 2012.

Many new courses, specialized areas of study, and new programs are continuously undergoing feasibility assessment in response to constituent interests and needs. For example, during the January 2013 SPARC Fest and Budget Hearings, interests in developing or expanding the following topics were listed: energy industry, beverage business, managing wildfire in urban forests, petroleum geology, organic farming, environmental economics, grassland systems, tree health, electronic art, undergraduate legal studies, fermentation science and technology, undergraduate neuroscience, and genomic architecture.

The response to Criterion 4 discusses in detail the institution's processes for evaluation of programs and student learning for assurance that the programs are meeting current needs, maintaining high quality, and continuously improving.

## **2. The institution articulates and differentiates learning goals for its undergraduate, graduate, post-baccalaureate, post-graduate, and certificate programs.**

CSU offers a broad array of contemporary academic degree programs with Bachelor's degrees in 72 fields, Master's and Professional degrees in 77 fields, Doctoral degrees in 44 fields, and the professional Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree (see *Official List of Colleges, Departments, Majors, Minors, and Degrees*). Each of these programs of study is distinctly differentiated by discipline (corresponding to a specific CIP code), and is organized around substantive and coherent curricula. The learning outcomes of each program must be articulated and the array of courses defined in the justification for curricular approval, and they are then disclosed in the *General Catalog* (section 2.1), the *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*, and other publications (including websites).

CSU offers a variety of master's degrees that are generally classified as Plan A, Plan B, or Plan C master's degrees. The Plan A option requires preparation of a thesis. The Plan B degree does not require a thesis; instead, more credits are earned in other types of courses and/or a scholarly paper is required. Plan C master's degree options are distinguished in two ways. First, generally, only course work is required. No thesis, project, or final examination is required; however, some specific programs may require an internship, practicum, or other experience consistent with expressed goals of the program, as approved by the UCC. Second, Plan C options are designed for professional degrees; thus, this option is not available in MA or MS programs. Further, within any given department, Plan C degrees may not bear the same title as those with Plan A or Plan B options.

The PhD is the highest academic degree offered by the University. Those who earn it must demonstrate significant intellectual achievement, high scholarly ability, and great breadth of knowledge. The nature of the degree program will vary greatly depending on the discipline involved. In addition, doctoral work requires heavy participation in research or other kinds of creative activity. Particular projects may assume any of an almost infinite number of forms. PhD requirements are described in section E.4 of the *Graduate and Professional Bulletin*.

## **3. The institution's program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery and all locations (on the main campus, at additional locations, by distance delivery, as dual credit, through contractual or consortial arrangements or any other modality).**

### **WHEREVER: Consistent program quality at all locations**

CSU is primarily a residential campus with only 2,841 (9.27%) of the 30,647 students enrolled through the Division of Continuing Education (Fall 2012), primarily as distance students. Therefore, classes and programs on campus set the standards for quality. The table below lists degree programs and off-campus locations that were active and approved as of the end of FY12. CSU was approved by HLC in 2012 to participate in the Commission's Notification Program for additional locations within the State of Colorado. The management of the off-campus locations and programs is described in detail in the application for this approval.

CSU has one off-campus consortial program (MA in English) that is offered at CSU-Pueblo. The details of this consortial arrangement are described in the application submitted in 2011 and subsequently approved by HLC in 2012. CSU-P has received Board approval to start offering their own MA in English starting Fall 2013, so enrollment of new students will be closed through the consortium at that time. Current, continuing students have the option to complete the program and graduate from CSU.

At present, CSU does not offer any special sections of concurrent enrollment (dual-credit) courses on high school campuses or exclusively to high school students. All courses currently approved for concurrent enrollment are courses regularly offered to university students and taught by university instructors. Therefore, learning outcomes and levels of achievement expected from concurrent enrollment students are consistent with those for other university

students.

Degree Programs: Off-Campus	Degree	Total Number Of Credits	Percent Distance Credits	Percent FTF Credits	Percent Credits At Site	FTF Off-Campus Locations*	Fall 2012 Students Enrolled	AY12 Graduates
Business Administration	MBA	40		100	100	Denver	33	16
Education and Human Resource Studies /Educational Leadership, Renewal, and Change	MEd	24-41	12.5	87.5	87.5	Brighton Commerce City Denver Fort Collins Longmont Loveland Windsor	28 total	37 total
Education and Human Resource Studies /Organizational Performance and Change	PHD	60		100	100	Brighton	21	0
Social Work	MSW	30		100	100	Brighton	78	2
English (Consortium with CSU-P)	MA	32-35		100	100	Colorado Springs Pueblo	33	35 10
*Loveland = Thompson Valley HS; Fort Collins = Fossil Ridge HS								

The BA in Economics represents another example of learning quality wherever a program is taught. Some courses in the program are taught for CSU credit by CSU faculty at the Foreign Trade University (FTU) in Hanoi, Vietnam. When these students complete the program on the CSU campus, several assessments indicate their success:

1. FTU student group performance is invariably higher than CSU resident students when identical grading standards are applied at FTU and at home at CSU.
2. FTU students take the Economics capstone course when they transfer to CSU. While the average grade in that course over the past three semesters has been 3.38, the average grade for the 59 FTU students has been 3.82.
3. The cumulative GPA of the FTU transfer students who were at CSU in May 2012 averaged 3.73. This compares with a general GPA of about 2.80 for Economics majors, and about 3.15 for Business majors.
4. Of 27 FTU transfer students who were CSU Economics majors in Spring 2012, 24 were included on the Dean's List. FTU transfer students represented about 7% of Economics majors, but 44% of the Dean's List.
5. Of the three top Spring 2012 graduating students in Economics identified by the department for awards purposes, all three were FTU transfer students.

**HOWEVER: Consistent program quality across all modes of delivery**

CSU has a rigorous review process for approval of all courses, programs and changes to programs. Once a course or degree program has been approved for face-to-face (FTF) instruction, there is no further curricular review or internal approval required for off-campus FTF instruction. Through FY12, FTF courses were allowed to use a blend of face-to-face instruction (67% minimum) and distance delivery methods (no more than 33%). However, when FTF instruction was planned to be less than 67% for any section of the course, UCC policy required the department to seek review and specific approval from the UCC to offer a nontraditional course. The policy was revised in Fall 2012 to comply with new HLC definitions of instructional delivery as FTF, mixed (hybrid), and distance delivery courses. The UCC retained the requirement for review of all course modifications that did not maintain the 75% or greater FTF standard to ensure that interaction between students and faculty, workload, and learning objectives were not modified to the extent that program quality might be compromised or violate the credit hour definition. (See Definition of Instruction Format, Faculty Council minutes Nov. 6, 2012).

A program may utilize faculty members who teach on-campus courses to also teach the courses in the off-campus programs and distance delivered courses. The instructor's academic department is responsible for assessing the impact on an instructor's workload and for making appropriate adjustments in assignments and staffing, both on-campus and off-campus, to balance instructional capacity. CSU complies with all CDHE Policies and Procedures which include, in part: "Instructors teaching in either component in the Extended Campus, if not members of the resident faculty of the sponsoring institution, shall have qualifications equivalent to those required of regular, on-campus faculty appointed to teach the same courses in the resident program. Instructors teaching in either program component are subject to the same approval and evaluation processes required of resident faculty."

Course content, requirements, outcomes, assessments, and evaluations are the responsibility of

the academic department wherever and however instruction occurs. All course requirements and learning goals are expected to be the same as those for on-campus (FTF) instruction. For this reason credit is transcribed without distinction between on-campus and off-campus courses or delivery method. Distance and off-campus programs must have equivalent rigor, admissions requirements, and instructor qualifications as on-campus offerings. During the program review process, departments that offer programs at off-campus locations must indicate how they "monitor academic quality (faculty, courses, facilities, services, learning outcomes, etc.) and manage continuous program improvement in the same manner that they manage on-campus quality and improvement with documentation to support claims, e.g., program assessment results and improvements from off-campus sites. If the off-campus processes differ from on-campus processes, the department should explain what is different and why."

Coincident with the 2004 HLC comprehensive review, CSU was granted unlimited authority for distance delivery of programs already offered on campus. This authority was subsequently modified by HLC to 20% of the total number of degree programs when policies were revised in 2011-2012. The following table identifies 28 distance programs (14.4% of 194 degree programs) as defined by offering 50% or more of the required courses (credits) by distance delivery.

Distance Degree Programs	Degree	Start	Total	Percent	Percent	Fall 2012	AY12
			Number Of Credits	Distance Credits	FTF Credits	Students Enrolled	Graduates
Agricultural Business	BS		120*	100		17	0
Master of Agricultural Extension Education	MAEE		30	100		16	4
Agricultural Sciences	MAGR		36	100		27	3
Integrated Resource Management			33	100		62	4
Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology	MIOP		38	100		31	2
Business Administration	MBA		40	100		1085	299
Business Administration	MS		40	100		105	0
Civil Engineering	MS		30	100		0	2
Computer Science	MCS		35	100		76	25
	MS		35	100		2##	0
Design and Merchandising/Apparel and Merchandising**	MS		36	100		3	0
Education and Human Resource Studies/Adult Education and Training	MEd		30	100		112	37
/Organizational Performance and Change			33	100		16	30
Education and Human Resource Studies/Community College Leadership	PHD		60	75	25	98##	0
/Higher Education Leadership						1	7
/Educational Leadership, Renewal, and Change						1	3
Electrical Engineering	MS		30	100		#	#
Engineering/Civil Engineering	ME		30	100		49	0
/Biomedical Engineering			30	100		12	0
/Engineering Management			30	100		#	#
/System Engineering			30	100		52	1
/Electrical & Computer Engineering			30	100		#	#
/Mechanical Engineering			30	100		10	2
Fire and Emergency Services Administration	BS		120*	100		59	17
Food Science and Nutrition*	MS		36	100		9	0
Human Development and Family Studies	BS		120*	100		103	22
Liberal Arts	BA		120*	100		43	12
Mechanical Engineering	MS		30	100		0	0
Mechanical Engineering	PHD		30	75	25	7	0
Music	MM		30	90	10	34	5
Natural Sciences Education	MNSE		34	100		10	0
Rangeland Ecosystem Science	MS		30-32	80	20	30	2
Student Affairs in Higher Education	MS		45	100		22	#
Statistics	MS		34	100		31	6
Applied Statistics	MAS		31	100		38	#
Systems Engineering	MS		30	100		1	#
Systems Engineering	PHD		72	100		#	#
*Degree completion programs requiring a minimum of 40-60 credits for admission.							
**Some courses offered through the GP-IDEA Consortium							
#Programs first offered in Fall 2012							
## Teach-out programs, closed to new enrollment.							

Distance degree-seeking students' performance is comparable to on-campus students' performance based on the following observations:

- **Graduation rates:** Graduation rates for the largest graduate distance program (MBA) and the largest undergraduate distance program (Human Development and Family Studies BS) are similar to rates for students enrolled in the on-campus version of the same degree.
  - MBA (3-year graduation): 85.0% and 89.8% for 767 distance and 59 on-campus students, respectively.
  - HDFS (4-year graduation): 63.4% and 57.1% for 41 distance and 28 on-campus students, respectively. Note that for comparative purposes, the on-campus cohort includes transfer students only since most DCE students enter as transfers.
- **Grades earned in equivalent course sections:** The distribution of grades within distance

delivered course sections was compared with the on-campus sections for the Fall 2012 term. For graduate courses and upper level undergraduate courses, the distributions appear to be quite comparable. This is likely the result of prerequisite requirements and students' experiences that result in students with comparable education experience and aptitude being enrolled in the courses. Lower level undergraduate courses (in the 100's and 200's) seem to show inconsistent patterns of grade distribution when trying to compare the performance of distance and on-campus students. Frequently, the distance students earned higher grades. Rather than distance courses being easier, this result may reflect large differences in the cohorts of students, such as age (distance students are nontraditional aged versus 18-20 yr-old on-campus) and educational motivation (distance students are degree completion candidates who have already successfully completed greater than 60 credits versus on-campus freshmen and sophomores). Some on-campus students may be enrolled in these courses for the purpose of exploring educational options (majors), whereas degree completion students are more inclined to be taking the course to fulfill a specific degree requirement. From overall retention and graduation rate data, we know that once students pass the 60 credit hurdle, they have a much higher success rate than students who have not successfully completed 60 credits.

- **Program assessment of distance learning outcomes:** The College of Business MBA program is the largest and one of the oldest distance programs offered by CSU. To facilitate comparable learning in the on-campus and distance versions of the program, instructors' classroom presentations are transmitted by distance delivery to students, and for learning assessment, the same assignments and examinations are required. In comparisons of direct learning measurements for on-campus and off-campus students on four objectives, distance students scored slightly higher for two objectives, slightly lower for one, and nearly the same on the fourth. All differences were small and not statistically significant. The strength and quality of the distance MBA program was commended in 2011 by the AACSB Visit Team during the special accreditation review. Learning assessment in the MBA program is summarized in the following table.

MBA Program Learning Assessment
<p>Learning goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop full-spectrum managers knowledgeable in accountancy, finance, management, marketing, operations, and legal and economic environments;</li> <li>• To understand the role of information systems and technology, quantitative methods, analytical techniques and model building;</li> <li>• To identify and solve business problems and communicate solutions through collaboration and application of strategic management;</li> <li>• To ensure an appreciation of the sustainable global business environment and the demands of international cooperation and competition;</li> <li>• To refine and promote business leadership potential while applying ethical business practices; and</li> <li>• To create an environment that produces a high level of satisfaction among stakeholders including students, faculty, administration, alumni, and employers.</li> </ul> <p>To assure fulfillment of the learning goals of the MBA program, the complete learning process is evaluated from the credentials of applicants to the placement and experiences of graduates. Numerous indirect assessments, such as course evaluations, student surveys, exit surveys, alumni surveys, etc., are used to determine the perceived value of the program. Direct learning assessments are primarily based on the mapping of specific course objectives to program learning goals; then using specific assignments mapped to the course objectives as the measurement tools. For all direct learning assessments in the 2005-11 assessment report, cohort scores were above the threshold for "meets expectations." Numerous opportunities for program adjustments were implemented through these processes, as listed in the detailed report, to assure that the program continues to improve and provide a high quality educational experience.</p>

## Division of Continuing Education

The CDHE requires CSU to designate an administrative unit and administrative officer to be responsible for planning, management, marketing, delivery, and coordination of distance and off-campus programs. The Division of Continuing Education (DCE) and its Associate Provost are charged with these responsibilities. CSU has a lengthy history of distance and off-campus delivery of quality programs to students. The first distance program CSU delivered was marketed as the State University Resources for Graduate Education (SURGE) program that began in 1967 using videotaped lectures. This program grew to include several engineering specializations, statistics, computer science, and the MBA. The SURGE name was dropped in 1997 although many of the programs continued. With the evolution of technology, videotape delivery was eliminated and programs are now offered using modern distance delivery modalities. Students may choose by program to either "attend" the course synchronously or asynchronously from wherever the participant may choose. DCE currently serves 2,841 degree-seeking students through distance delivery and off-campus locations. These students are fully admitted CSU students who register through DCE. In 2011, "OnlinePlus" was chosen for rebranding marketing efforts since more than 95% of web searches for distance learning opportunities include the word "online." Because DCE does more than offer online courses, "Plus" was added. It highlights the fact that DCE offers off-campus and non-credit programs and invests in infrastructure, such as The Institute for Learning and

Teaching (TILT), to address needs for continuous improvement of teaching and learning quality. (See DCE Annual Report 2012).

The Mission of DCE is rooted in CSU's land-grant heritage of outreach, research, and service to support the advancement of our students' education as illustrated in Goal 24 of the *Strategic Plan*, which focuses on Lifelong Learning:

"Both the Division of Continuing Education and CSU Extension will actively partner with the colleges to develop and deliver programs, courses, and educational experiences face-to-face, online, and via video for youth, nontraditional students, working professionals, alumni, business and industry and other groups. These efforts support Colorado State's commitment to economic development, organizational excellence, and professional development. They are part of the extension and service of a model 21st-century land-grant institution."

DCE's *Strategic and Operating Plan* describes how it intends to deliver CSU programs, services, and experiences to students in support of the access and engagement mission of the University. CSU's goal through DCE is to grow distance education by selecting campus programs that target audiences based on very degree-specific psychographics; however, there are some general demographics that apply across the entire audience. Generally speaking, marketing efforts target career-driven professionals aged 25-45, with an equal balance among men and women who are site-bound (by either families or jobs) and cannot relocate to the campus. Currently, distance demand is growing much faster than campus demand at approximately a 10-15% growth rate per year. Limited growth in off-campus locations is anticipated because advances in technology are facilitating a shift to more online distance delivery. Each year, one or two off-campus locations may be added or closed. Long-term, the overall demand for off-campus locations is expected to be static with changes based primarily on closing locations where the existing market demand is met and opening new locations where an unmet demand is identified.

**Marketing, recruitment, and enrollment of DCE students.** Both educational and economic successes are key criteria when selecting programs for distance or off-campus delivery. DCE operates as a cash-funded enterprise. Therefore, on the economic side, a structured process is used that includes a profit and loss model specific for each program based on estimated numbers of students available and courses offered, and overall impact on the institution. Based on these results, enrollment goals, spending levels and tuition are all evaluated to determine if risk levels are manageable before deciding to offer a program.

As is shown in DCE's organizational chart, it has a dedicated marketing unit whose work generates over 50,000 unique website visitors per month. The unit includes a marketing writer, a web marketing manager, a search advertising manager, a marketing communication manager, and two marketing managers. The marketing unit works closely with units in the Division of External Relations to ensure consistency of design and messaging. To ensure the accuracy of all information including marketing materials, there is a regular review by departments, Curriculum and Catalog Office, and DCE's marketing and program operations units. Whenever concerns are reported, they are systematically researched and identified errors are corrected.

DCE has its own recruitment and retention unit that helps each prospective student make informed decisions to return to a degree program and find the right program, even if that program is not at CSU. This unit includes staff members assigned as undergraduate engagement coordinators, a pre-admissions advisor in a position shared with the Registrar's Office, four graduate student engagement coordinators, and four graduate retention coordinators. Most of DCE's programs are niche oriented and need a carefully considered fit for students. The engagement coordinators guide prospective students through the basic questions and encourage them to contact an academic department, financial aid, or other support service advisers for more specific questions. DCE works closely with CSU Admissions, the Graduate School, and Student Financial Services to provide consistent information and contacts. The academic departments serve as the capacity gate keepers. DCE adjusts its recruitment plans to the department's ability to continue to deliver high-quality instruction. When bottlenecks occur, be it advising capacity or teaching capacity, DCE works with the department to solve the challenges. The number of courses and sections offered is ultimately based on the institution's ability to continuously deliver high-quality learning.

Prospective DCE students are often encouraged to complete a course or two prior to admission as a fully matriculated student to test their fit with the program and become familiar with the technology of distance-delivered instruction. Course prerequisite requirements are not enforced in these cases because an official transcript is often not available for analysis.

All DCE students must register with the University for an electronic identification (eID) (described in section 4.0(d) of Federal Compliance), which provides them access to the student portal RAMWeb, email, and other restricted services such as the library. RAMWeb provides students online access to obtain grades at the end of the semester, view their student account expenses and balances, and to access and update their personal information. For DCE students, online registration is available only via the DCE website, but all other functions of RAMWeb are available.

The following table provides AY12 demographic data for distance enrollment in degree programs. It illustrates that most of these students are nontraditional in age and that the undergraduate students are enrolled in degree-completion programs. The majority of students in DCE programs are working professionals so they often take only one course per term resulting in slower progress to graduation than on-campus students.

Demographic	Graduate	Undergraduate
<b>Age</b>		
<20	0	0
20-24	27	44
25-29	329	52
30-34	506	42
35-39	378	28
40-44	272	21
45-49	157	8
50-54	119	8
55-59	52	4
60-64	16	0
65-69	1	0
70-74	1	0
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian	35	8
Asian	209	9
Hawaiian	14	0
Hispanic	181	14
Multi-racial	65	14
Unreported	259	19
White	2013	221
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	868	154
Male	1459	97
<b>Class level</b>		
Freshman		2
Sophomore		17
Junior		162
Senior		246

Support services for DCE students. DCE has a retention unit specifically charged with facilitating student success. Once a student is admitted and has completed the first semester, the retention unit, using a customer-relation management system (CRM), takes over as the primary student support provider. The team works closely with the Registrar’s Office, including one staff member for undergraduate programs who has a split appointment between DCE and the Registrar’s Office. This overlap between DCE and the other units within CSU helps to send clear, accurate, and consistent messages to all students and prospective students. The DCE has Program Directors for the specific programs offered by distance and at the off-campus locations. Program Directors are also responsible for facilitating the success of students. They do not have authority for decisions regarding assignments, release time, and compensation for distance and off-campus instructors, which are the purview of the departments and colleges just as for on-campus instructors. However, Program Directors may work with departments and instructors to answer student questions and address concerns. Program Directors also coordinate instructor interactions with TILT to facilitate improvements in instructional design and delivery.

DCE allocates funding for support of student service units on the campus (student support services are described in detail in Component 3.D.1) to assure that distance and off-campus students receive needed services, including resources for disabled students, equivalent where

appropriate, to those available to on-campus students. Since DCE students are not required to pay student fees, there are some services, such as use of the Campus Recreational Center, student rates at sporting events, and student public transportation passes, that are not available. If desired, a DCE student may pay the additional student fees, and then have access to these amenities. All policies, processes, and procedures are standardized as much as possible for on-campus and DCE students. Issues of student privacy, safety, and security; access to appeal and grievance procedures; and uniformity of financial procedures and rules are identical or equivalent when distance or time must be considered as a factor. DCE provides students with all the appropriate website links and information for these campus services on DCE's website. Also, DCE has a toll-free phone number students may call to be transferred to the appropriate unit on-campus to answer any questions or concerns the student may have. Additionally, DCE Student Engagement Coordinators may work one-on-one with students to complete Graduate School applications, financial aid applications (no financial aid advice is given), and registration forms. This personal aspect ensures students that their application will be complete and will be submitted to the appropriate on-campus units for advising and processing.

DCE has an internal Appeals Committee that handles registration appeals. The goal of the committee is to address the unique circumstances of nontraditional students. The majority of the appeals are requests for late withdrawal and refund due to unforeseen life situations. There are also some appeals from students who received a tuition bill but did not realize they had registered. These issues are remedied at the website level whenever possible. All grade appeals are handled by the academic departments per University policy.

For programs located off-campus, the Program Directors are more focused on site-based physical needs to support instruction of the courses. In particular, the Program Directors evaluate potential off-campus locations to ensure that appropriately equipped classrooms are available, including instructional technology support and internet connectivity. Student accessibility and safety are evaluated to ensure the availability of adequate parking, lighting, evening security, etc. The Program Directors meet with faculty members prior to the beginning of the semester to determine if there are any specific needs for the off-campus classroom. Also, the DCE Program Directors communicate with faculty members and students by attending class sessions on a regular basis to ensure that the classrooms are adequately equipped with the required technology and have necessary space. If students or faculty members have specific requests, they contact the DCE Program Directors who then work with DCE's administration to determine if the request can be fulfilled.

DCE has staff dedicated to acquisition and support of the technology needed for distance delivered content. Distance courses that are captured for streaming have trained student staff in the classroom for technology operation and trouble shooting. These students are supported by a learning technologies team including three full-time media specialists. The media specialists also support RamCT (Blackboard) for distance instructors and students. DCE relies on the same campus technology assistance for distance students as the University uses for on-campus students. There are tutorials within the CSU RamCT portal for students' questions. Since the University help-desk is geared toward on-campus students, although also serving distance students, this additional layer of support is crucial to distance students. The technical capacities and capabilities of the University are monitored by Academic Computing Networking Services (ACNS). ACNS works seamlessly with all campus entities to ensure technology is not compromised. (ACNS resources are detailed in Component 5.A.1). All technology maintenance, upgrades, backup, remote services, and software, hardware or technical systems for communicating with students and instructors are handled by ACNS. ACNS maintains use and standards policies for the on-campus and distance students.

DCE performance assessment and improvement processes. DCE students are encouraged to complete course survey forms at the end of each course. These surveys are currently the same as those completed by on-campus students. DCE and TILT are proposing a slightly different survey form that includes additional questions regarding the technology utilization and functionality in each course, which is expected to inform improvement of distance courses.

DCE students and instructors have various ways to report concerns or problems and provide feedback beyond the end-of-course student course surveys. Students and instructors may

contact the DCE Program Director directly, who will contact the appropriate departments or units to resolve the issue or share the concerns. Students and instructors may, at any time, also communicate and work with academic department staff including department administrative assistants, department head and/or the college dean. Students may contact any student service unit directly and may always communicate with DCE to help resolve concerns. DCE works to the best of its ability to adequately meet specific needs including new technology, audio and visual equipment, climate control, and furniture. DCE Program Directors purchase new equipment or materials if the expense is modest; if it is a larger purchase, such as a new projector, the Program Directors work with DCE's administration to purchase the appropriate equipment or supplies. DCE administration assesses existing space and classroom utilization on a semester basis in order to schedule courses as well as ensure that classrooms are equipped appropriately.

DCE provides funds to support development and improved design of online courses. To ensure quality instructional design, courses that receive developmental funding from DCE must utilize the instructional designers in TILT (detailed in Component 3.C.4). TILT uses a Quality Matters' based set of standards that it applies to all online courses to assure a very high level of student engagement consistent with the FTF equivalent contact hour definition. Online courses developed without TILT assistance are evaluated by the DCE Program Directors and learning technology specialist for compliance with quality standards. Student feedback and research of best practices also serve as the basis for recommendations for improvements to meet the expected standard of regular and substantial engagement between faculty and students. DCE offers instructors \$3,000 per course to collaborate with TILT and pays TILT an average of \$15,000 per course to build the course to the current standards. DCE is in the process of sending all of the online courses through the instruction design and review processes provided by TILT to ensure quality and consistency. Syllabi from the following courses are provided to illustrate how student engagement is designed into the learning experiences: EDHE673, FESA331, PHIL103, SOWK552, and SOWK554. A course such as FESA331 may generate more than 1,200 postings by 20 students in threaded discussions within an 8-week term.

Additionally, DCE encourages distance faculty to engage additional graduate teaching assistants or equivalent to facilitate engagement with distance students by responding at least daily to administrative questions and assuring academic questions are addressed by faculty as soon as possible and at least within 24 hours.

All instructors at CSU have access to the TILT website, which provides a tutorial entitled Copyright Essentials for Educators. This tutorial provides several tools for instructors including information on fair-use and the TEACH Act. There is a link from the online course platform that goes directly to the TILT page where the tutorial is accessed.

Some courses remain lecture capture, which are then either streamed to students or housed in the online platform course shell. In these cases, instructors have concluded that this delivery mode is appropriate for accomplishing the desired level of engaged instruction. Working with the TILT course designers, instructors are encouraged to present lectures in smaller portions and sparingly rather than as the main delivery technology, wherever practical.

To explore the responses of distance students on the NSSE, differences in benchmark means between distance students and traditional students were analyzed. The OnlinePlus NSSE report is provided as an exhibit that shows the frequency responses for all of the survey questions in the 2012 NSSE for distance (OnlinePlus) and traditional students. Since NSSE surveys at the first-year and senior student levels, comparisons of NSSE responses always need to be made within a student level. The sample size for distance students is small (13 for first-year and 34 for seniors), which limits the power of the analysis. The small sample size is most likely due to the timing of the NSSE survey, which is based on enrollment at census while many distance enrollments occur later in the semester and most undergraduate distance students are enrolled in degree-completion programs so the number of available first-year students is very small. First-year distance students have lower mean scores across all five of the benchmark means compared to traditional first-year students. Distance seniors have higher mean scores compared to traditional seniors in the Level of Academic Challenge, Enriching Education Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment benchmarks. Distance seniors have a lower (not statistically significant) mean score for Active and Collaborative Learning and a statistically

significant lower mean score for Student Faculty Interactions compared to traditional seniors. This statistically significant difference has a moderate effect size.

## Sources

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- Division of Continuing Education Annual Report 2012
- Division of Continuing Education Organizational Chart
- EDHE673 Syllabus
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- Graduate and Professional Bulletin - July 2013 (Page 34)
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- Strategic Plan 2012 (Page 14)
- Strategic Plan 2012 (Page 23)
- Strategic Plan 2012 (Page 8)