

Chapter 11

Capacity for Advancing the Quality of Learning and Scholarship

Criterion Four: *Colorado State University can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.*

Introduction

As described in the previous chapters, CSU is well organized to assure both integrity in the use of its resources and flexibility in a rapidly changing global environment. It regularly demonstrates the capacity to marshal necessary resources without compromising its principles and standards of excellence in the face of austere state resources. The University manages judicious shifting of resources when needs arise, such as improving undergraduate education, maintaining and upgrading information technology, strengthening the Libraries, and disaster recovery. This chapter provides evidence that CSU has the structured assessment, planning, and decision-making processes necessary to effectively manage its resources and to accomplish its purposes now and in the future. The chapter begins with a review of planning processes that define the short- and long-term goals of the institution. Resource allocation (budgeting) processes are briefly reviewed to illustrate linkages to assessment and planning processes. Other parts of the chapter attest to the institution's responsive planning and decision-making processes and thorough assessment processes for accountability and continued improvement of the quality of learning and scholarship. In the context of planning to address challenges and opportunities, a brief scan of the environment in which the University operates is included with emphasis on state funding, state higher education policies, and changing demographics in Colorado regarding participation in higher education. Overall, the chapter provides patterns of evidence that CSU fulfills Criterion Four for accreditation by HLC.

University Planning Process

Decision-Making Processes

CSU has pursued a stratified approach to the critically important functions of planning and decision-making. One component consists of planning and decision-making activities occurring at the unit-level within the various departments, colleges, agencies, and divisions of the University. The other component consists of centralized University planning. The integration of these two processes has produced a comprehensive USP, although it raises some concerns about being very process oriented for limited accomplishments. This process

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was an outgrowth of the diversity of programs and complexity of units making up the University. The assumption underlying this process is that those individuals closest to the issues, challenges and opportunities being considered are generally in the strongest position to make wise and prudent choices. On the other hand, a centralized process must develop overarching plans and make decisions affecting the entire institution.

Although the smaller functional units of the University make many planning decisions, such plans and decisions are made in concert with the mission and vision statements of the University and in pursuit of its articulated campus priorities. Integration of the various units' plans occurs as a result of regularly scheduled interactions among the department heads, deans, directors, vice presidents, Strategic Planning Committee, EBC, the President and many other committees and ad hoc groups.

The advantages of unit-level planning to the institution are several. First, it allows for great flexibility; academic units as different as Art and Veterinary Medicine are able to develop plans uniquely suited to their needs and the needs of their students while still fitting under the goals of the USP. Second, this approach encourages "grass-roots" involvement and ownership of the planning process. Since much significant planning is done at the local level, faculty, staff, students, alumni and other constituent groups have the opportunity, and the motivation, to become active participants in the process. In addition, because of its inclusiveness, this system tends to produce novel solutions to perceived problems. It also helps keep the University at the cutting edge of innovation in a time of rapid and sometimes radical change. Finally, the emphasis on local planning allows the University to identify needs and concerns more quickly and to deal with them more expeditiously.

This approach is not, however, without its disadvantages. For example, it is often difficult to design, develop and implement interdisciplinary and intra-university programs (such as the University Honors Program), and it takes special efforts to see that they are carefully and creatively cultivated to assure that there is needed support and buy-in from various constituents. Coordination across functional boundaries of plans designed and developed at the unit-level likewise requires effective communication. It is in dealing with such issues that centrally applied mechanisms of communication and cooperation are called into play. Clearly, in this complex decentralized system, communication across functional boundaries is of paramount importance, and it is an area in which there is room for improvement.

Central Planning

In 1991, the University undertook the challenge to develop and implement a transforming planning process that would define the course of the University in its quest for excellence. A **Strategic Planning Committee** was appointed by the President and was

charged with overseeing the annual development of a comprehensive *University Strategic Plan*. The Committee was broadly constituted and consisted of representatives from the faculty, deans, student body, the administrative professional and state-classified personnel staff, and the vice presidents. The VPRIT has served as the committee chair from its inception.

The Strategic Planning Committee set about its initial planning task by first developing a *Context for Planning* <www.research.colostate.edu/usp/> which outlined a set of common understandings about the University's heritage, mission, culture and values. The Strategic Planning Committee has updated this document every four years to keep it current and assure its relevance to annual planning. Changes are made primarily to the Objectives to reflect and accommodate the changing environment and to identify new opportunities available to the University. The **cultural and values** elements that comprise CSU's distinctive characteristics and the **criteria for decision-making and prioritization** that the University uses in its planning and budgeting are defined in Chapter 5.

The planning framework evolved from these common understandings to consist of broadly stated **Goals** that were clarified and further defined by adding more specific **Objectives**. Over the past 10 years of active planning, the Goals were consolidated and reduced to five specific areas: (1) Integrated Learning; (2) Research and Scholarship; (3) Outreach; (4) University Community; and (5) Physical and Financial Resources. The Goals were clarified with additional language showing how they supported the mission as a land-grant university. Each Goal contained more specific Objectives that provided increased specificity of intended outcomes and identified criteria associated with achieving the stated Goals. This **Strategic Planning Framework** consisting of the five Goals and their corresponding Objectives became the consistent way to organize the planning efforts that occurred across the University's entire organizational spectrum.

To create a 4-year USP, the annual planning process (see Table 11-1 for details) developed specific planning strategies to achieve the plan's objectives. These prioritized strategies guided the annual budget allocations. Through the years, refinements and improvements were made to the process. All of these changes came after a careful review of the effectiveness of the planning process. Two concerns related to the planning process were expressed in the 1994 NCA Evaluation Team report and subsequent University responses have been discussed in Chapter 3. One on-campus review came from the *Change and Reform Initiative* that the University undertook in 1995. A significant number of improvements were recommended which were further refined in subsequent years: (1) focusing the plan on major strategic areas facing the University; (2) sharpening the focus of annual planning efforts; (3) increasing campus involvement in the planning process; (4) creating a comprehensive plan;

(5) providing feedback and accountability of the strategic planning process; and (6) integration of other review and planning efforts.

Table 11-1. Annual planning and budgeting schedule.

Category	Activity Period and/or Target Date	Responsibility	Activity
Finalization and publication of the <i>Annual Update of USP</i> for the next FY	June	Strategic Planning Committee and Council of Deans	Identify Key Strategies for Implementation Plan development
		Strategic Planning Committee	<i>Annual Update of USP</i> for the FY beginning July 1 is published, including: relevant KS/IPs and Key Strategies to be developed for the following year; 10-year Physical Development Plan; University and College Development Campaign Priorities.
Finalization of KS/IPs and preparation of Consolidated Plans	November → January	Strategic Planning Committee, Council of Deans, KS/IP committees	Draft KS/IPs published for University community review and comment; finalized and provided to Planning & Budget Hearing Proposal presenters along with Hearing guidelines
	January	Provost/Council of Deans, other Vice Presidents/division directors, President	Development of Consolidated Academic and Academic Support Plans, building from unit plans and focusing on KS/IPs, mandatory, and/or extraordinary needs or opportunities.
Development of next FY's proposed budget, <i>USP</i> and KS/IPs	March	Provost, other Vice Presidents, President, Agency Directors	Presentation of Consolidated Academic and Academic Support Plans at Budget & Planning Hearings for FY commencing July 1.
		Executive Budget Committee, Strategic Planning Committee	Prepares budget proposal (EBC), drafts <i>Update of USP</i> and recommendations for the next FY's KS/IPs (SPC)
	March → April	University community	University comment period on the next FY's, budget proposal, draft <i>Update of USP</i> , and KS/IP recommendations
	April	President, Executive Budget Committee	Reviews budget proposal
	April → May	Faculty Council	Makes recommendations on <i>Update of USP</i> to President and SPC
Approval and publication of next FY's budget and <i>Annual Update of USP</i>	May	Board of Governors Budget Committee	Reviews budget and Physical Development Plan proposals
		Strategic Planning Committee	Integrates inputs into revised <i>Update of USP</i> and provides to President for approval
	June	Board of Governors, Office of Budgets & Institutional Analysis	Approves (BOG) proposed operating budgets; releases (OBIA) budget allocations to University
		Strategic Planning Committee, Council of Deans	Finalize identification of Key Strategies for development of Implementation Plans during FY commencing July 1.
	Strategic Planning Committee	Publication of <i>Annual Update of USP for the next FY (commencing July 1)</i>	

Planning Process Improvements

After several years of annually updating the USP, it became apparent that the scope of planning in any given year needed to be better defined and articulated to the campus. Without doing this carefully in advance of extensive planning efforts by the University, the result was disappointment and cynicism for invariably the resulting plans called for more resources than were available. Over time, as strategic planning evolved from an open ended,

bottom-up process, the challenge of gaining campus understanding and support for the resulting USP continued. To overcome this problem, consolidated presentations were made to summarize the priorities of each division in place of the previous practice of inviting each Dean, agency Director, and other unit leaders to make individual presentations. To further focus these presentations, OBIA prepared budget assumptions for the coming year so that the presentations included realistic budget and resource requests. Because of tight University budgets over the past several years, the budget assumptions also included a budget reallocation expectation for each major administrative unit.

The initial planning efforts did not consider facilities and development planning that supports the Goals, Objectives, and KS/IPs identified in the annual planning process. Now as part of the annual planning process, the VPAS calls for input, during the fall semester, from all University units to update the *Ten-Year Physical Development Plan* that covers all capital projects funded from all sources. Over the years the *Annual Update of the USP* became the primary way that the University communicates its major Goals and Objectives along with specific strategies for emphasis in the coming and future years.

All academic and administrative units are required to undertake comprehensive program reviews (at least every seven years) of their activities and programs. These are yearlong efforts that review each unit's mission, measure accomplishments against previous plans, compare productivity and quality with peers, identify issues and opportunities and develop a long-range plan. The action plans of program reviews are expected to flow through the consolidated plans into the planning and budgeting process (Budget and Planning Hearings). A specific schedule now has been developed that aligns these activities with specialized accreditation reviews and consolidates the timing of departmental reviews within a college. Further, these reviews are also aligned with the USP in that units are required to define how their activities and future plans support it. This review activity serves as both input and feedback to the University planning process.

There also has been extensive review and planning directed toward enhancing the diversity of the university, improving the campus climate and assuring the safety and well-being of the university community. The vice-presidents are charged with the responsibility of integrating the University Diversity Plan (*Diversity & the University Community: A Plan for Action, 1998-2003*) into the planning and budgeting process.

Current Status of Planning

The *Context for Planning* is the 5-year (formerly 4-year) planning document that charts the course for *Annual Updates to the USP* and serves as a guide to planning and budget priorities for the next half decade. In Fall 2002, modest yet significant changes to the *Context for Planning* were proposed. The language used in the *Context for Planning* was to be unified

with the language used in the *Annual Updates to the USP*. In past versions, the *Context for Planning* referred to “Goals and Objectives,” while the *Annual Updates* referred to “Key Strategies and Implementation Plans.” For the new draft of the *Context for Planning*, Shared Priorities for Progress (SPPs) were proposed. SPPs were defined as the broad areas in which the University intends to improve, each composed of multiple 5-year Goals (the quantifiable parameters to be used to gauge success). In Fall 2002, the institution’s leaders from all divisions participated in an open discussion of the proposed SPPs: (1) Learning/Teaching Environment; (2) Academic Master Plan/Enrollment Management; (3) Scholarship and Research; (4) Diversity and Community; (5) Infrastructure and Facilities; (6) University Advancement; and (7) Annual Critical Opportunities/Challenges. In addition, there was discussion of two overarching principles/goals of commitment to outreach and internationalism. The goal was to complete the *Context for Planning: FY05-09* by the close of Spring 2003 for implementation July 1, 2004.

During Fall 2002, several developments led to the conclusion that this was a “non-traditional year for our university’s strategic planning activities” (*FY04 Draft KS/IPs*, November 2002). The combination of state-wide budget uncertainties with impending reductions, higher education funding policy discussions by the CCHE Blue Ribbon Panel, CSUS changes including the transition to CSU-P, and the search for a new CSU President made this a challenging time to establish a realistic and balanced set of goals. Therefore, redrafting the *Context for Planning*, including quantitative goals and implementation plans, was delayed until Fall 2003 or later to allow a clearer vision of the issues facing CSU to emerge. As a component of the draft *Annual Update of the USP for FY04*, KS/IPs rather than SPPs were extended for FY05. To provide adequate time for input by President Penley, the revision of the *Context for Planning* and conversion from KS/IPs to SPPs has been deferred.

Short-term strategic planning was also impacted by the same factors that contributed uncertainty to long-term planning. The State’s budget picture (as discussed later in this chapter) was not optimistic, suggesting that the annual planning and budget process would likely be more focused on budget reductions than allocation of new resources to implement new initiatives. Additions to the KS/IPs were only to be considered for FY04 in the most compelling of circumstances. In the present challenging fiscal context, the University is faced with striking a balance in the planning process between retrenchment and unrealistic dreaming. CSU is committed to refine the strategic planning process in a way that will enable it to grow and improve in spite of the State fiscal context.

During Fall 2003, the Office of P/AVP and the COD initiated a new planning process in the Division of Academic Affairs. The process is designed to identify measurable goals for the future; identify obstacles that stand in the way of achieving these goals and recommend strategies for removing them; examine the alignment of organizational structure

relative to achieving the goals and recommend changes if necessary; and evaluate use of current resources and provide recommendations regarding potential efficiencies. Initial planning reports are expected by the end of 2003. Five major areas of planning have been identified. Examples of the specific issues addressed within each of the five areas are as follows:

- **Undergraduate Education** – Formulation of an undergraduate enrollment plan, with consideration of alternative admission models; improvements in advising and student retention; determination of the most effective structure and curriculum for the University Honors Program.
- **Graduate Education** – Examination of role and structure for the graduate school; determination of the most appropriate array of graduate programs at both the master's and doctoral level; enhanced recruitment of international students; and review of workload and remuneration for GTAs.
- **Research** – Strengthening of research programs by identifying areas for further development with particular emphasis on interdisciplinary research programs; building capacity to enhance future research funding by strategic investments in faculty and facilities; and supporting linkages between research and graduate education.
- **Outreach** – Further clarification of the unique roles of individual units in outreach, and the specific role of DCE and its reporting relationship; consideration of alternative strategies for funding of the agencies; and establishment of appropriate goals for outreach activity by individuals and units.
- **Workload/Funding Model** – Identification of uniform workload metrics and evaluation standards across units; determination of appropriate levels of research assignments supported by E&G funds; review of the current position allocation system and evaluation of institutional funding models.

In September 2003, the President identified a need for more focused leadership to address overall planning and management issues at the CSUS level and to move strategic planning responsibilities closer to the President and Chancellor duties. As a result, the position of Vice Chancellor for Strategic Planning was created. Updating the existing strategic planning process (*Context for Planning* and KS/IPs) has been suspended at this time. Significant refinements and changes are expected so the process can serve CSU better in the future.

Comprehensive Planning

With the majority of existing resources controlled within unit budgets, the opportunity and responsibility to make annual resource allocations to address the priorities of

the USP reside largely in the units. The integration and inclusion of unit plans has occurred through the following five processes: (1) *Consolidated Academic Plan*, (2) *Consolidated Academic Support Plans*, (3) *Ten-Year Physical Development Plan*, (4) *University and College Development Campaign Priorities*, and (5) the *University Diversity Plan*.

Consolidated Academic Plan

The *Consolidated Academic Plan* was developed by the P/AVP working with the COD to summarize priority activities of the Office of P/AVP and from individual college and agency plans that are directed toward accomplishing the KS/IPs. This plan identified and aggregated key items in support of institutional priorities from unit plans for consideration during the central planning and budget hearings. Several examples of planning activities that contributed to the *Consolidated Academic Plan* are discussed to illustrate the varied nature of planning activities and the institution's capacity to advance.

Plan for Agriculture

The University is committed to preserving and strengthening an existing agricultural infrastructure that will allow it to connect the agricultural expertise of the University to the citizens of the State. Supporting the sustainability of Colorado agriculture, while at the same time conserving the State's natural resources, is fundamental to the land-grant mission of CSU and a primary role of CAS. Agriculture, in its broadest sense, is found in every college within the University. Program direction and change in agriculture relies on input from individuals in all colleges who participate in agricultural-related programs, students, representatives from commodity groups, and other external clientele in the State. Although the primary leadership role for enhancement and preservation of Colorado's agriculture rests with CAS, overall University leadership is provided by the Vice Provost for Agriculture and Outreach.

The *Plan for Agriculture at Colorado State University, 2002-2007* <www.agsci.colostate.edu/pdf/PlanforAgriculture2002-2007.pdf> identifies several priority areas for teaching, research, and outreach for the next five years. This plan contains both priorities for work of primary importance to external clientele and priorities internal to the University. In order to provide the best service to its constituents, the College and the related agencies constantly solicit stakeholder input concerning agricultural issues. Through the position of Vice Provost for Agriculture and Outreach, the University has provided an administrative system to facilitate its ability to address all agricultural issues and the leadership to assure that appropriate and timely budgetary priority and faculty attention are given to addressing agriculture's present as well as emerging issues. Other internal issues include building partnerships among CAS departments and others with agricultural programs; increasing

externally supported research in the College; strengthening the connection between campus generated information and county extension personnel and Colorado citizens; enhancing recruiting and retention of high-quality undergraduate students; and developing stronger relationships with the College alumni base. Each of the issues above has an associated strategy and set of actions to be taken to meet the issue.

College of Natural Resources Planning

In 1995, CNR developed a Strategic Plan that reflects the tremendous paradigm shifts in natural resources management, policy and science that occurred during the 1980s and early 1990s. These paradigm shifts reflected fundamental changes in social values toward the protection, rather than the use of natural resources. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development further focused the world's attention on the extent of biodiversity losses, pollution, population growth and the need for sustainable development. The importance of these emerging issues created opportunities for CNR to enhance CSU's land-grant mission by providing a "liberal and practical" education in the science and technology of environmental management.

In 2000, CNR began a process to assess its organizational structure and education programs in light of its mission and vision. Faculty committees, over a 2-year period, examined the curricular, programmatic, and procedural elements that make up CNR at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in arriving at a proposed reorganization of the College. The outcome of the reorganization review is that the previous organization of five departments was reduced to four departments. Although all CNR majors and graduate programs remain the same, two departments (Forest Sciences and Rangeland Ecosystem Science) and the Watershed Management Program merged to become the Department of Forest, Rangeland and Watershed Stewardship. The new department will promote interdisciplinary and collaborative stewardship of rangelands and forests and innovative graduate and undergraduate programs.

A Fall 2002 Joint Task Force comprised of CNR and CAS representatives was charged to examine "whether or not the current organizational model best positions the faculty and resources of the University to meet the needs of these constituents and accomplish our mission." This Task Force recommended retaining the current two college organizational model. Specifically, the clientele, alumni and students of the colleges believed that their links to the institution are stronger with two distinct colleges and that combining the two colleges would result in a diminution of reputation for the programs in both.

Library of the Future

The Provost's *Library of the Future* Task Force met during the Summer and Fall of

2000 to define future directions for the Libraries. Input and participation from academic faculty and library faculty and staff was a strong component of the planning process. The *Library of the Future* initiative provided vision, clear priorities, and direction for future decision-making on use and distribution of new library resources

The Task Force report <manta.library.colostate.edu/taskforce.pdf> established goals for the Libraries, working in collaboration with other areas of the campus, to best meet the University's need for library resources. The Libraries will emphasize electronic resources to complement the traditional archiving of print materials in order to maximize access to available resources. Enhancements in the condition of the Libraries to a position of distinction are ongoing, as significant resource allocations have already been made over the past four years since the flood disaster. The Libraries continues to remain a very high priority for CSU, and it is expected that it will continue to compete successfully for additional enhancements in the future.

Division of Continuing Education

The *Focus on the Future Plan* that was approved and implemented in Spring 2002 was the beginning of a strategic plan for renewal in DCE. The new organizational structure places emphasis on efficient financial, marketing and student enrollment services while simultaneously setting new outreach and revenue expectations. Previously, DCE advertised programs and waited for students to enroll, a very common practice in the 1990's. In the new strategic plan, DCE will be calling on leaders and representatives within market segments, assessing their educational needs with the goal of becoming the primary provider of continuing education programs specifically designed and packaged to meet their needs. This will be accomplished by delivery of demand-driven programs to non-traditional students in a variety of formats utilizing current technology. Some of these programs will be customized for on-site professional development training. DCE has set a goal of becoming recognized in metro-Denver as a "corporate university" for large companies by offering full-service, in-house education and training to employees. DCE also plans to develop and deliver programs in Fort Collins to build strong community relationships. New markets are being identified by reviewing the demographics of students in existing programs and by identifying how existing markets are being served. The increased efforts to solicit and act on constituent and stakeholder needs are expected to provide valuable information to the campus community as resident programs are assessed. The collaborations are expected to obtain economies of scale while fulfilling the land grant mission of education, research and outreach at CSU and create greater awareness and accessibility to current and expanded program offerings.

A new strategy of partnering with the Office of International Programs to operate as the program staff for the international market has been implemented. Work has begun with

CE to utilize existing advisory committees to expand relationships with the agricultural market. Internally, organizational changes made with the Denver staff are beginning to shift from a credit and non-credit structure to a market-based structure.

Faculty Replacement Planning

The University has established the goal of sustaining faculty and administrative professional quality, recognizing that this is a time of significant retirements, external competition, and changing faculty roles and responsibilities. The age distribution of faculty members has led to speculation that a large percentage (perhaps as great as 40%) could be considering retirement within the next five years. Such an exodus of faculty members would clearly have a significant impact on the University's ability to continue to successfully accomplish all of its purposes as well as the management of financial resources. Therefore, a *Survey of Faculty Retirement Plans* was conducted in December 2002 to assist the University in planning faculty replacements in what could be a highly competitive labor market under austere budget circumstances. Subsequently, OBIA developed a *Faculty Flow Model: Anticipating Faculty Retirement and Restricted Hiring* to investigate the effect of potential hiring restrictions given the pattern of anticipated retirements predicted by the survey.

Survey responses indicate the largest proportion of anticipated retirements will occur over a period of about three years, beginning in 2004. The survey data were entered into the faculty flow model together with current position inventory data, information from the Human Resources data system, and various OBIA annual studies of faculty salaries, retention, promotion and tenure to examine the effects of faculty retirements in CLA and CNS. These two colleges were selected for beta-testing of the simulation model because they were made up of large numbers of faculty members and represented opposing ends of the spectrum of recruitment and start-up costs. Although the accuracy of the model has not been established, some trends are clearly forecast that illustrate the fiscal impacts of various policy decisions or policy constraints. This example is provided as evidence of the capacity of CSU to analyze complex systems in support of strategic planning and management decisions.

Consolidated Academic Support Plans

The *Consolidated Academic Support Plans* are developed by the Vice Presidents and President working with their respective division directors. These plans consolidate and aggregate key items in support of institutional priorities from unit plans for consideration during the central planning and budget hearings. Several examples of planning activities that contribute to the *Consolidated Academic Support Plans* are discussed to illustrate the varied nature of planning activities and the institution's capacity to advance.

Division of Student Affairs

The DSA has an established strategic planning process that is goal-driven. Each of the 12 goals are linked to KS/IPs, with DSA taking a key leadership role for implementation of three KS/IPs (Diversity, Civility, and Enrollment Management). Although all DSA goals are priorities, each unit within DSA is not required to focus on accomplishing every goal. Through its strategic planning process, DSA has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to be flexible and creative toward achieving its goals. DSA receives a small portion (\$11M) of the E&G budget. Therefore, it relies heavily on revenue from student fees, auxiliary services, and Federal access programs. Some recent examples of accomplishments that demonstrate the capacity of DSA to enhance programs both within DSA and the University are:

- Seizing low interest rate opportunities to refinance existing debt and gain revenue for facilities improvements and renovations in Lory Student Center;
- Transferring Career Center, Off-Campus Student Services, and Ombudman Services to student fee-based funding to allow reallocation of \$343,887 in the E&G budget;
- Reorganizing and refocusing Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services to support mediation, conflict resolution and restorative justice in addition to standard sanctioning for policy violations;
- Increasing overhead expenses to auxiliary units by 19%, thus providing \$481,248 additional revenue in the University budget for reallocation; and
- Maximizing operating efficiencies among units in the division through cooperative sharing of resources, e.g., Housing and Food Services facilities and maintenance crews have contracted to provide services to Hartshorn Health Services rather than maintaining two independent services.

Assessment and research activities are very important in identifying and articulating measurable outcomes for DSA. The Assessment and Research Steering Committee (ARSC) was organized to support the division's assessment goals and provides information to the VPSA through the VP Council regarding assessment and research efforts in DSA. Through an evolving process of determining what would be the most useful management information in context with university and division missions, DSA planning and decision-making is becoming increasingly data-driven to compare its position in relation to competitors, past performance, and previously set goals (Appendix B, *Guidelines for Student Affairs Programs to Develop Assessment Plans Using New Format*, <www.provost.colostate.edu/print/assess_sa.doc>).

ARSC is the advocate for the division's research, benchmarking, and assessment activities. The division's assessment and research efforts strive to improve services and develop programs, to improve the knowledge base about student development and student services work in general, and to assess the organizational effectiveness of DSA. ARSC

collaborates with the Director of Assessment in the Office of the P/AVP and with OBIA to optimize procedures for planning and evaluation, and to use the results in a broad-based continuous planning and evaluation process that benefits the entire institution.

In Fall 2002, ARSC requested that all student affairs programs provide an inventory of their assessment instruments and target populations. The reported frequency of assessment ranged from daily to 7-year program reviews, with nearly all assessments occurring annually or more frequently. CSU staff developed most assessment instruments, but several national instruments are used as well, numbering about 35 for DSA areas alone. Some examples are the National Student Clearing House to track postsecondary enrollment of bridge participants, and national survey tools for college bookstores and food services. Program improvements resulting from assessment procedures regularly occur in nearly every program based on multiple assessments within programs. Improvements are reported for each of 300 plus assessments. For example, programs modified training, policies and procedures, services, work environments, student access to services, and functionality of websites in response to analysis of assessment results.

By the end of Spring 2003, ARSC expanded its role to include annual peer review responsibilities and programs agreed to join the University's PRISM process (described later in this chapter) and reported assessment plans for 37 programs online in June 2003. These plans include links to the University's planning tools, descriptions of outcomes, summaries of assessment results, and identification of program improvements that are based on the assessment process. This information is being placed online in Fall 2003 with access available to the University community.

Information and Instructional Technology

CSU has developed and implemented a long-term strategic plan to deploy, use and support information technologies to enhance teaching and learning using contemporary systems. In 1998, a long-range planning document entitled *CSU Information and Instructional Technology in Education for the Year 2000* (CSUIITE 2000) charted the course for a truly effective integration of ITT with the educational purposes of the University. CSUIITE 2000 is being implemented as a series of independent projects. The timeline for implementation is very uncertain due to the State's revenue projections. Buildings to be upgraded (rewired) under CSUIITE 2000 are prioritized. The classrooms to be upgraded under CSUIITE 2000 are prioritized by OIS with input from the Classroom Review Board (described in Chapter 6). Building upgrades encompass fiber optic infrastructure, secure communications closets, conduit and raceways for cabling, high-speed copper cabling to the wall jack, and high-speed switches to activate the network. The information technology status of all buildings on the Main, South and Foothills Campuses and the instructional technology

status of general assignment classrooms are available on the CSUIITE web page
<www.colostate.edu/Depts/ACNS_Pubs/ACNS_Home/csuiite/index.html>.

CSU has embarked on a major project to replace student information systems with contemporary systems. A new student information system will provide significantly improved enrollment management, recruitment, scheduling, degree audit, student financial aid, etc. service accessible online in real time. The features of the new system will be accessible to authorized faculty, staff and students. During FY02, a functional and technical specification was developed but release of a Request for Proposal and selection of a system was suspended due to State budget issues. In FY04, this project was restarted.

ACNS has identified the need to modernize central computing services. Increased demand for central computing services and new services has exceeded ACNS and IS budgets for hardware upgrades. Two priorities have been identified: (1) new, central server hardware, and (2) new portal software. A portal will provide individualized, personalized electronic access to virtually all electronic services. A portal will provide increased efficiencies and functionality in diverse areas. Four of our peer institutions, Iowa State, Oregon State, UC-Davis and Washington State have deployed portals and more than one-fifth (21.4%) of the campuses participating in the Campus Computing Project in 2001 report a plan for student portal services (compared to 12.6% in 2000). In September 2003, a contract was negotiated and signed for the purchase of a student information system with student portal services.

To meet future demands, the University for the last two and one-half years has been working with other Universities in the region and with the State Division of Information Technology to explore Next Generation Networking. This collaboration offers much greater capacity and much lower cost when amortized over a long-term lease period for fiber, causing the University to reconsider telecommunications costs as a capital budget item rather than just as a recurring expense. If this effort is successful, it will allow the University to meet the challenge of increased demand, as well as provide Next Generation Networking to support advanced research and education needs.

Ten-Year Physical Development Plan

Upgrading of facilities and infrastructure must be synchronized with programmatic planning and is, therefore, an integral part of the strategic planning process. The *Ten-Year PDP* is a rolling 10-year, all-inclusive capital construction and controlled maintenance project list. It is updated annually to stay current with the institution's latest programmatic and budgetary decisions. Priorities assigned reflect the University's judgment regarding the relative order of importance of major projects planned in the ensuing 10 fiscal years. Capital projects are implemented as funding becomes available, and removed from the PDP when the project is fully funded or when the need is no longer deemed to be a priority. The prioritized PDP is used to inform planning and budget hearings and is summarized in the *Annual Update*

of the USP. It also serves as the basis for the Capital Development Budget Request for State funding sent to the President for the Board approval and submission to the CCHE in May for incorporation into its subsequent budget submission to the Legislature.

The PDP <www.colostate.edu/Depts/Facilities/planning/pdp2003.pdf> provides a brief description of each project and the institutional priority assigned by both the University and the unit that the project will support. Funding information and program plan status are also shown. Non-prioritized projects are listed on the PDP for future planning purposes. Non-prioritized projects are recognized needs that currently fall beyond the projected ten-year planning and funding window. Each fiscal year, facilities needs requests are carefully ranked for funding consideration. High priorities are assigned to achieve the following outcomes:

- Complete currently funded phased capital construction projects;
- Meet changing programmatic demands identified in the USP;
- Provide for major maintenance items identified by Facility Condition Audits; and
- Address critical health and life safety issues.

While the current economy has resulted in reduced funding of new state-funded programs, the 2003 PDP lists the following priority projects:

- University Center for the Arts – renovations and additions to the Old Fort Collins High School to house the department of Music, Theatre, and Dance and provide display spaced for artwork, historic costumes, textiles, and several natural history collections;
- Wagar Building – revitalize the facility by correcting structural, mechanical, electrical, and information technology deficiencies;
- San Luis Valley Research Center improvements;
- Forestry Building – revitalize the facility by correcting structural, mechanical, electrical, and information technology deficiencies;
- Veterinary Diagnostic Medicine Center – new facility, a cooperative project between CSU and CO Department of Agriculture; and
- Regulated Materials Handling Facility – new facility on South Campus, permitted by regulatory authorities to accumulate, manage, store, and prepare for disposal all hazardous chemical wastes and radiation wastes.

These examples illustrate how the PDP contributes to accomplishing the priorities of the USP and to implementing the campus master plan.

Main Campus Master Plan

Foundation for a New Century is the current physical master plan for the main campus at CSU that contains most of the academic buildings, the core of auxiliary functions and student Residence Halls. The plan was approved by CCHE in September 1997.

Foundation for a New Century recommends goals, objectives, and design principles for improving the campus environment well into the new century. As the plan is implemented, the University will improve campus aesthetics, meet required space needs, plan for facility upgrades, and improve site conditions. The plan establishes the foundation for continuity, while being flexible enough to support ever-changing programmatic needs. It recommends a campus form that is architecturally appropriate, historically relevant, and includes an open space system and landscape structure as important elements of its public image. This campus form and the plan's urban design and landscape principles will contribute to creating a sense of place, which is intended to symbolize the University's role and mission. CSU aspires to create an intellectual environment that is conducive to the pursuit of scholarly excellence, a place that demonstrates pride and legacy.

Foundation for a New Century provides the basis for individual long-range plans and subplans. Long-range plans include campus circulation, transit, building revitalization, landscape and gardens, utilities, and land acquisition. The subplans include outdoor lighting and safety, signage, drainage, art in public places, ADA Transition Plan, plaza improvements, and plans for outlying campuses.

Since master planning is a process, the University continues to review, challenge, and update the plan to meet needs as they change. Thus, *Foundation for a New Century* is based on evolving demographics of the University and not specific time frames. Updated in 2003, the basic premise of the current Master Plan is to establish a physical plan consistent with the goals of the University and anticipate future needs. For example, the long-range (10-20 years) enrollment is projected to reach 25,000 FTE (currently 21,700 FTE), and the short-range (5-6 years) enrollment increase is forecast to be 1750 FTE. The current plan and its update strengthen a pedestrian core on the 389-acre Main Campus and will accommodate future growth in academic and support functions. In anticipation of this future pedestrian core to the campus, the City of Fort Collins obtained multi-million dollar federal funding (with in-kind land and utility connections provided by CSU) for a campus Transit Center next to the Lory Student Center. Preservation of open space, creation of areas for public art and enhancing the physical landscape of the campus are also important goals of the Master Plan update, building on current efforts to beautify the campus environment. Currently the University is coordinating with the City of Fort Collins as it plans for construction of the Mason Street Corridor, which will provide high-speed bus service between the University and downtown Fort Collins as well as outlying shopping, and housing. Clustering future growth on this corridor will provide students and faculty an alternative to daily use of the car.

The South Campus subplan serves as an example of long-range planning for an outlying campus. CVMBS has led the process of drafting a Long Range Development Plan for the VTH complex and CSU's Veterinary Medicine Site (south of the Main Campus) in

coordination with planned capital construction projects through the year 2025. This plan supports the CVMBS' goal of becoming the "number one" College of Veterinary Medicine in the nation. The site plan establishes the location of required future facilities and includes proposed circulation for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles in addition to other public amenities. After identification of 16 project priorities and their associated costs, the total probable cost was estimated in the range of \$120M to \$150M in 2002 dollars. The South Campus plan is incorporated into the 2003 Master Plan. A similar subplan for the Foothills Campus is also being finalized.

University and College Development Campaign Priorities

External constituents have become important partners in the educational enterprise through their generous contributions as the University seeks to extend its financial base. The Office of University Development is charged with ensuring that the university and its colleges/units meet their fundraising goals; providing effective and efficient support services for the overall development program through the offices of Annual Giving, Planned Giving, Corporate/Foundation Relations and Donor Relations; assisting the colleges/units in building volunteer linkages that will result in increased support for their areas; and providing timely and accurate reports on the progress of fund raising efforts.

The Vice President for Development and University Relations works with each College to develop a prioritized list of University and College development campaign priorities. Each spring, colleges/units submit their dollar and project goals, volunteer goals, top 10 and next 25 prospects, and unit development budgets to the Executive Director of Development. The Dean/Director, Director of Development, Executive Director of Development and Vice President then meet to finalize the goals and budget. The goals and top fund raising projects are presented to the Provost for review and then submitted to the University's Development Council. This prioritized list is forwarded to the EBC by February before Presidential approval and inclusion in the *Annual Update of the USP*.

The development program at CSU has made tremendous strides through the past 10 years (described in Chapter 6). Evidence of this can be seen in two areas: increases in total gift dollars and total number of alumni donors. However, only 9-10% of the alumni participated with gifts. The value of CSU's total invested assets at the end of FY03 was \$135.8M which is smaller than most peers' investment assets. Development is one area with potential for the University to cultivate new sources of revenue.

University Diversity Plan

Diversity and the University Community: A Plan for Action, 1998-2003 guided strategic planning and institutional commitment to enhancing institutional diversity, in many

forms, through different ideas and perspectives, age, ability, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and the socioeconomic and geographic composition of its faculty, staff, and students. The most recent 5-year University Diversity Plan was adopted in Fall 1998. Both academic and non-academic units have implemented specific initiatives aimed at supporting the plan. Each Vice President's division assesses progress annually. The DCC reviews these assessments and makes recommendations for the continuation or termination of previous initiatives and the development of new initiatives. The DCC provides oversight and leadership in implementing unit diversity initiatives that support the diversity plan and coordinates diversity initiatives using a 'master calendar' of events. The diversity plan is currently (Fall 2003) being revised and updated to become the University Diversity Plan for the next five years.

A detailed status report on diversity accomplishments was included in the FY04 Draft KS/IPs (November 2002) as Attachment B. The Board has adopted an "Affirmative Action Policy and Procedures" statement (Page X-1, BOGCSUS Policy Manual, December 2002) and established procedures for CSU to report annual accomplishments for each fiscal year.

CCHE has been directed by the General Assembly to establish an affirmative action policy for the Commission, governing boards, and institutions. Since 1989, the Commission has annually reviewed reports on minority faculty, staff, and student representation in Colorado higher education. Each institution is required to establish a diversity plan, which is both long-term and short-term in character. Institutions must submit an annual report in the format specified by CCHE and respond to CCHE's analysis of the plans. In 1999, CCHE indicated that the CSU diversity plan provided a comprehensive approach to diversity with articulated goals and objectives in three broad categorical areas: students, faculty and staff, and campus environments. Strengths of the plan noted by CCHE included: emphasis on ethnic studies and the infusion of multiculturalism throughout the curriculum; involvement of the admissions office in new student recruitment and enrollment; and a broad range of activities. Concerns were expressed regarding the following issues: lack of conscientious or clearly set methodology for accomplishing the goals; not stating specific goals in some instances; need for more conscientious diversity planning and programming in graduate education; need for more conscientious approach to faculty diversity; need for greater effort to work with the Fort Collins community to achieve campus diversity goals; and greater accountability through assignment of specific administrative officials to have responsibility for monitoring and sustaining progress. Each of these concerns has been addressed. CSU now singles out diversity as a high priority for the institution by having a separate diversity plan that is folded into the *Annual Updates of the USP* through a specific element rather than expecting it to be a component of all elements of the USP. Specific implementation plans are stated and annual

progress is assessed. This process is expected to continue to serve CSU well.

Analyses to Support Planning

Accountability Reports

The *Context for Planning* identifies various **accountability reports** that communicate planning accomplishments and associated resource allocations to internal and external University constituencies. Key documents have included the *Annual Academic Planning Report*, the University five-year and annual division diversity plans, diversity accomplishment reports to the Board and CCHE, and other such quality indicator assurances as may be required from time to time by funding agencies, the Colorado General Assembly, CCHE, and the Board.

The *Annual Academic Planning Report* is prepared by the Provost in conformity with CCHE planning efforts and presented to the Board. The report offers information regarding the University's planning process, the main goals and strategies of the strategic plan, progress made on the plan during the past year, academic decisions contemplated within the next two years, and specific information regarding proposed new degree programs.

The *Affirmative Action/Diversity Plan Report* is prepared annually for submission in December to the Board and in January to CCHE. The report presents 5-year data by gender and ethnicity on enrollments, degrees, faculty, administrative-professionals, and state-classified staff. It also provides a discussion of University activities designed to enhance institutional diversity, including an analysis of trends and "best practices."

From time to time, *ad hoc Quality Assurance Reports* are required by the Board and other bodies to whom the University has reporting responsibilities, such as CCHE, the Colorado General Assembly, and Federal agencies. These reports are targeted at specific areas of interest to these external bodies.

Financial and Information Management

The Division of Administrative Services provides critical institutional support services by providing a wide variety of information and analyses to the campus community for use in institutional planning and decision-making. OBIA is responsible for collecting and maintaining institutional data inclusive of degrees conferred, persistence, retention, and the profile of the transfer student population. General OBIA information and reports can be viewed online <www.colostate.edu/Depts/OBIA/institutional.html>.

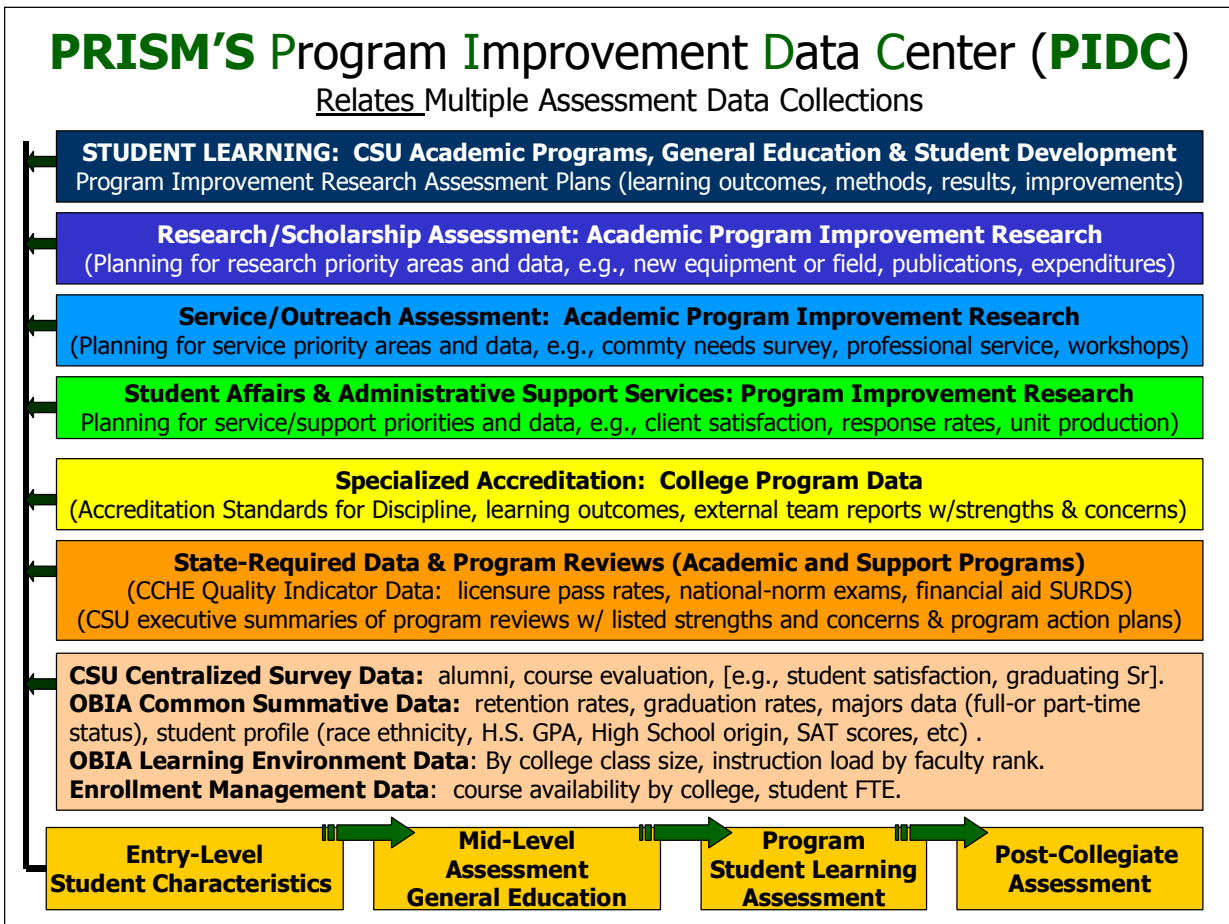
Many other documents are produced that provide data and analyses for use in planning and decision-making. All academic and administrative units conduct periodic program reviews and produce reports. Numerous programs conduct self-study reports for specialized accreditation review and subsequently receive external evaluation reports. Various

ad hoc committees are charged to study issues and report findings and recommendations from time to time. During the course of this self-study many of these documents were reviewed and used as resources. The University needs to make stronger efforts to assure the systematic archiving and central availability of the many documents that are produced in order to increase the efficiency of planning and continuous program improvement.

Outcomes Assessments

CSU is currently developing online interlinking capacity among academic program assessment results, DSA assessment results, *Common Data Set* annual reports <www.colostate.edu/Depts/OBIA/pdf/cds/cds0203.pdf>, and periodic program review results. The PRISM website <kiowa.colostate.edu/assessment/> provides a resource center for access to multiple types of data at a single site (Figure 11-1). Because more factors than classroom instruction contribute to student learning, integration of assessment data from many programs is necessary. For example, the “Taking Stock” survey shows that students study fewer hours than faculty expect without a corresponding decline in grades. Juxtaposing this information

Figure 11-1. PRISM’s program improvement data center components.



and other EBI benchmarking data next to assessment results for academic learning outcomes will allow faculty to consider multiple factors in the process of program improvement.

More data will be emerging from CSU's participation in the 2003 NSSE, including a pilot survey of faculty perceptions on student engagement. EBI data will continue arriving late in 2003. In addition, the University is administering the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey at the beginning of Fall 2003. It gathers data on some 1,800 institutions and over 11 million students. Plans are to administer a student campus climate survey in Fall 2003.

Building Capacity to Systematically Research Program Improvement

Planning

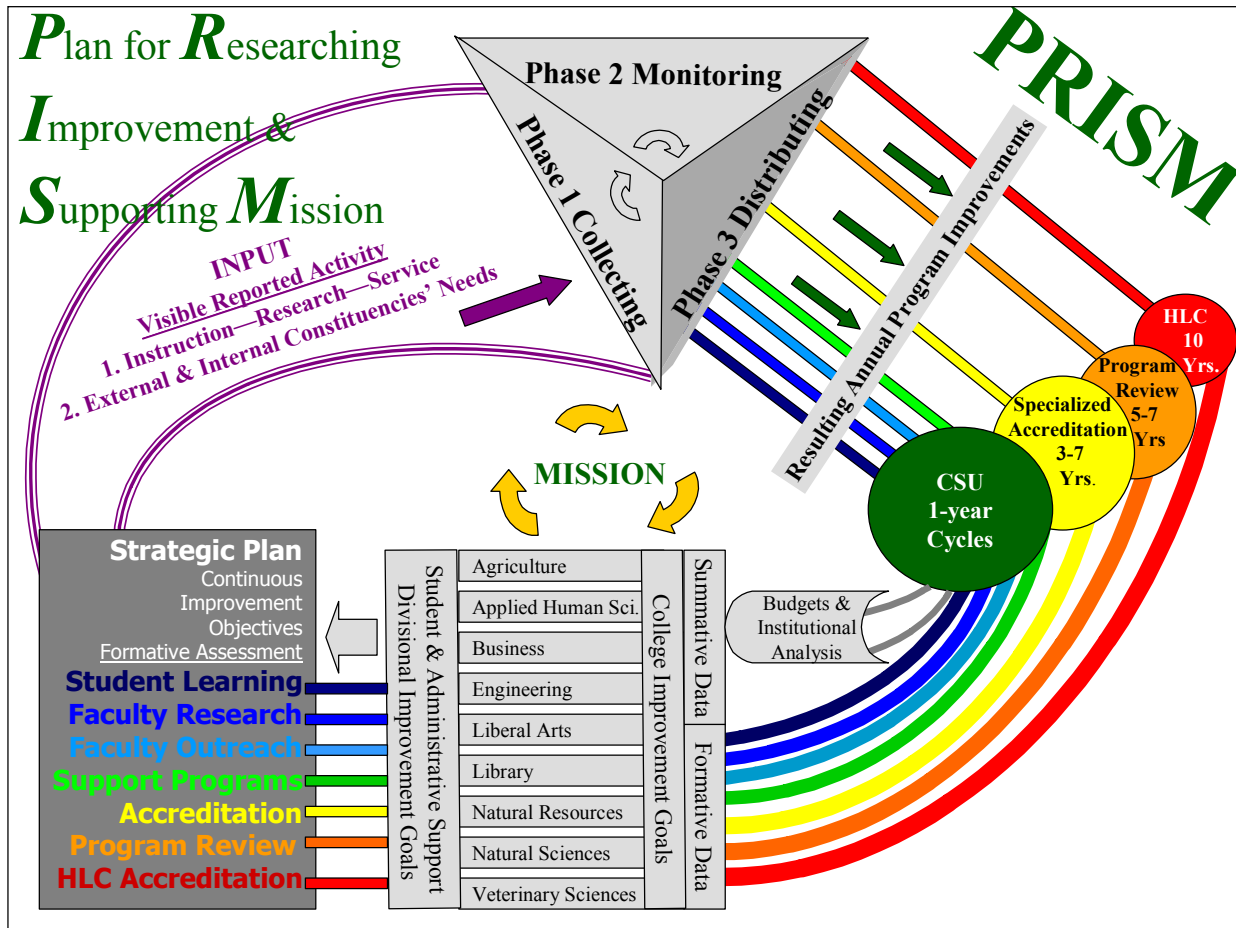
Beginning in June 1998, CSU's governing board placed the institution on a "learner centered" paradigm. This new commitment involved developing a formal, comprehensive, and effective institutional assessment and accountability program. The University's planning for FY03 identified periodic assessment with subsequent programmatic modification as an essential component of enhancement for both academic and service/support programs at CSU (*Annual Update of the USP, FY03*).

Implementation

By the end of December 2002, the University made significant progress in developing the capacity to continuously evaluate and improve academic programs, a growing requirement among specialized accrediting agencies and the HLC. Achievements included hiring a Director of Assessment, appointing of an academic assessment peer review committee, and designing a comprehensive assessment system for the university. In early October 2002, the new peer review committee, APAIC, endorsed a concept model for PRISM that communicates the CSU assessment planning process (Figure 11-2). In addition, APAIC developed guidelines for academic programs to develop new assessment plans by the end of December 2002 (Appendix C, *Guidelines for Programs to Develop New Assessment Plans*, <www.provost.colostate.edu/files/APAIC03update.doc>). This followed the Provost's memo to all deans and chairs outlining the need to develop new assessment plans, including outcomes for student learning, faculty research/scholarship and faculty service/outreach by this deadline.

APAIC oversees the development of PRISM and reviews its effectiveness, usefulness of data, and analyses so the process can be refined. APAIC plans to have academic programs complete two cycles of assessment before making systemic changes unless some urgent adjustments become necessary. This will allow faculty to familiarize themselves with the process and discover the added value of systematic assessment. While programs are

Figure 11-2. Conceptual model for PRISM.



expected to generate more rapid improvements at their unit-level, large-scale adjustments to PRISM will be delayed to assure that changes are genuine, and not appeasements of criticism and low-level support. APAIC plans to collect input from many sources as it evaluates potential changes. These sources include the academic program review process, university strategic planning process, specialized accreditation self-studies, accountability reporting (presently QIS) to the CCHE, ARSC feedback, and from advisory groups such as CAAD on issues such as AUCC.

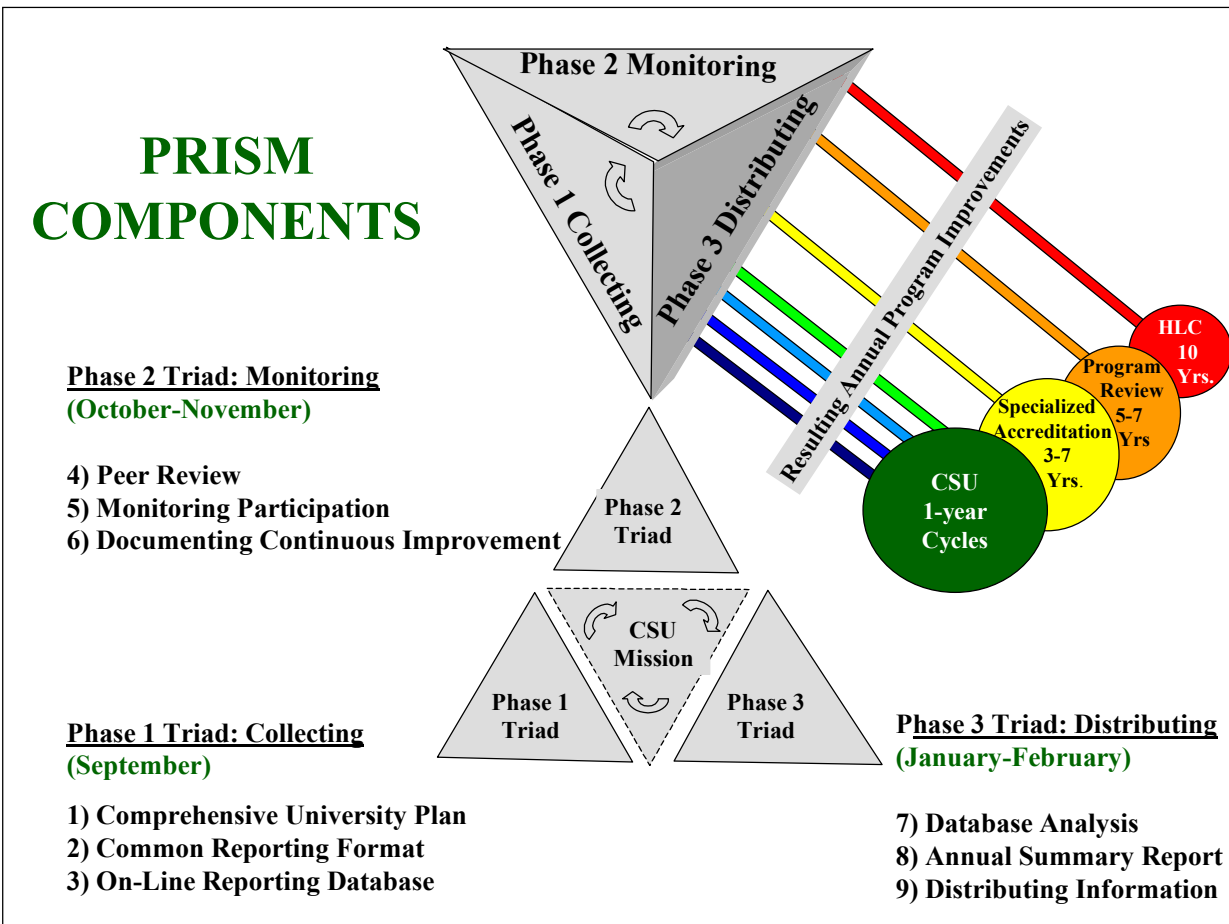
The PRISM Process

PRISM is a comprehensive, systematic process for continuously improving academic programs in the three areas of student learning (including general education), faculty research/scholarship, and faculty service/outreach. By placing emphasis on program improvement research and development of web-interactive resources, faculty and staff are provided the capacity to continuously improve programs. Direct assessment methods, faculty evaluation of data results that identify programmatic strengths and weaknesses, and formative

improvements based on assessment are characteristics of the process. This system has potential for university-wide impact, including all academic programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels as well as DSA programs.

The new PRISM process is designed to function on an annual time line and systematically integrate the following nine components (Figures 11-3): (1) a concept model that brings life to the plan, providing campus-wide recognition and process guidance; (2) a uniform reporting format for assessment plans that assists sharing of information and reporting of results; (3) an on-line assessment reporting database that saves faculty time, provides capacity to monitor participation, and documents continuous improvement; (4) a peer review committee to sustain quality assessment practices using annual reviews of plans; (5) a monitoring system to maintain an even level of assessment across the university and identify lagging programs that need added resources; (6) documentation capacity to record planning changes over time and to show dialogues occurring between the APAIC committee and programs; (7) analytic database capability to seek patterns of assessment activity university-wide; (8) an annual university-wide assessment report that gives college-specific or

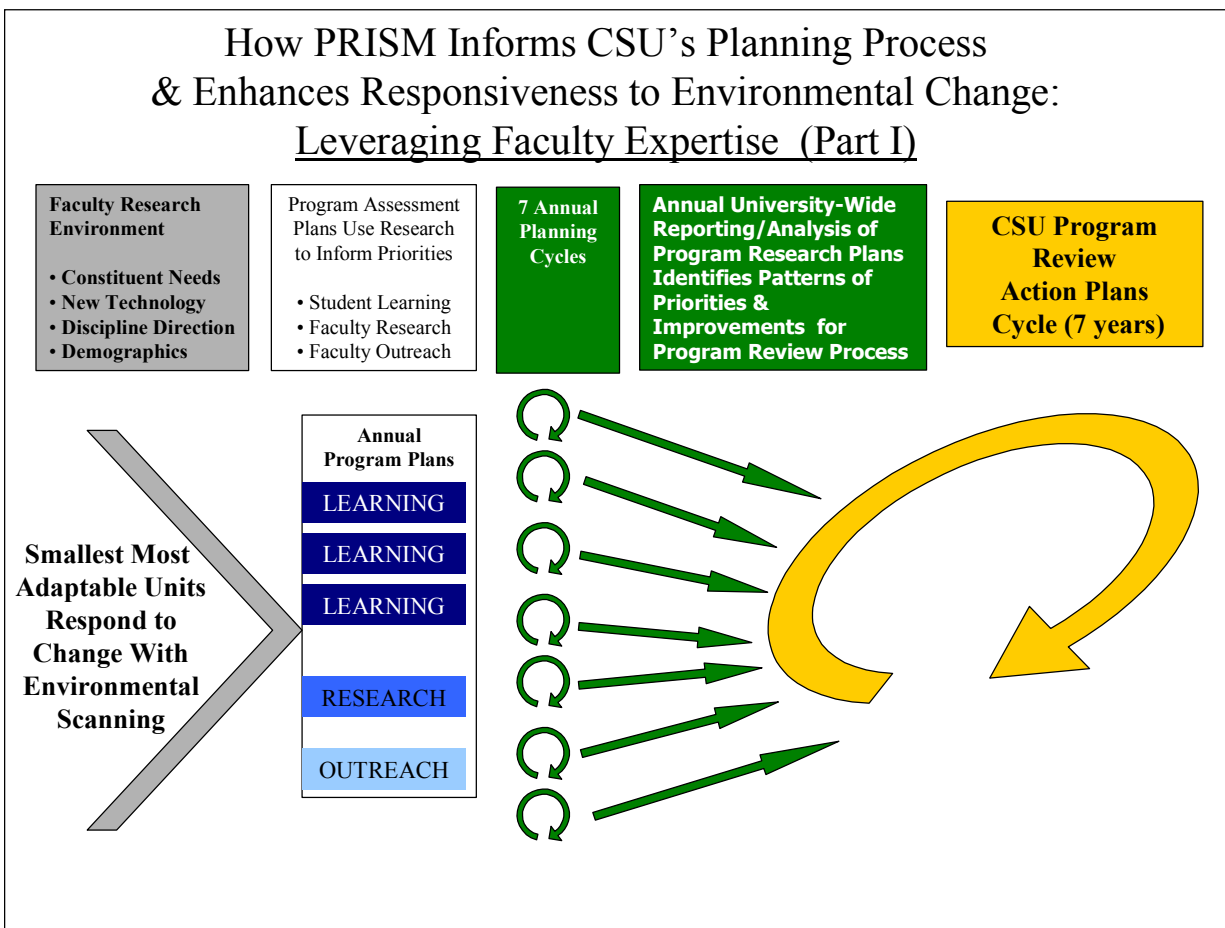
Figure 11-3. PRISM components.



support division-specific views of the planning outcomes selected, assessment methods used, program improvements implemented and program participation rates in the PRISM process; and (9) distribution capacity with an assessment website for sharing assessment information, archiving all academic and support program assessment plans with focused subject category guides for easy viewing. The website also will provide faculty and staff members with central data resources that accelerate information gathering for program evaluation (Figure 11-1). Students, faculty, staff and the external public will have Internet access to the University’s annual report, the University PRISM concept model for planning, the APAIC membership and reporting time lines, and the University’s annual “best practices” in assessment. Components 1 through 6 were implemented in December 2002. The distribution assessment website was operational in Fall 2003 with the first assessment report to be released in February 2004.

The strength of the PRISM process is its reliance on CSU’s high quality faculty. As expert consultants in their respective fields, they design program improvement plans – student learning, research, outreach – that reflect their most recent research of external environments,

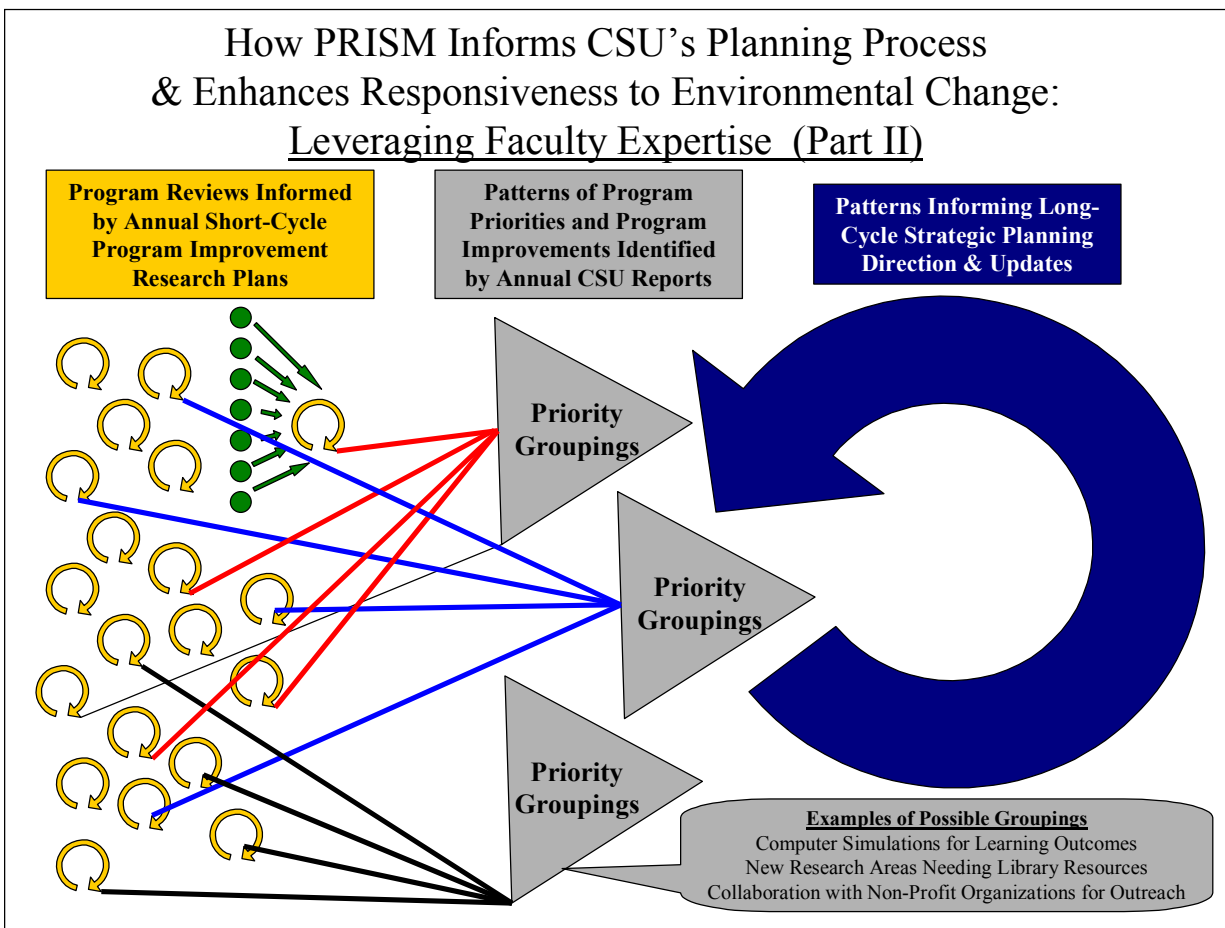
Figure 11-4. How PRISM informs CSU’s planning process (Part I).



their knowledge of changes in fields, and their consideration of constituents needs – industry, community, and students. Thus, the institution is well positioned to respond to fast-paced environmental change. PRISM is designed to inform long-range strategic planning as it inputs small unit, short-cycle improvement research into 6-year academic program reviews. The proposed annual university assessment reports will help identify patterns of priorities and improvements for strategic planning uses (Figures 11-4 and 11-5).

PRISM’s integrated, systemic structure is designed to help colleges and programs satisfy multiple reporting requirements for continuous improvement and accountability such as requests from specialized accreditation bodies, state-level program review requirements, the HLC, and the public. The process emphasizes establishment of planning priorities for program assessment, not assessing everything. Reducing duplicative efforts and prioritizing assessment outcome selections strengthen the viability of the program improvement research. Maintaining online centralized improvement documentation resources and centrally archiving plans for up to 10 years streamline faculty assessment work and expand public “visibility” of CSU’s program research process. This public recognition also serves as a reward to programs

Figure 11-5. How PRISM informs CSU’s planning process (Part II).



and their faculty. PRISM holds potential to generate many of the assessment-related patterns of evidence identified in the HLC criteria and in the Levels of Implementation for assessment practices.

Program Reviews

Academic Program Reviews

The *Academic Program Review Process* (Appendix D) is designed to provide plans and recommendations that lead to sustenance and improvement of department programs in addition to the reporting of accomplishments. The program review process is now conducted in a series of steps, rather than generation of a single comprehensive report. After the academic unit compiles an inventory of program activities, issues are jointly identified with a University Review Committee that are then the subject of further study. At this step, the review process is customized to fit the Department and its programs. Questions, which the Department Review Committee is asked to answer, are carefully posed, and expectations concerning the nature of answers are carefully defined. In subsequent steps, the program compiles an “Issues Report,” an Action Plan, and finally, a Departmental Planning and Budget Document. This last document, as appropriate, is incorporated into the University planning and budgeting process. An Executive Summary of each Action Plan is forwarded to the Faculty Council Committee on Strategic and Financial Planning.

As described earlier in this chapter, there are three major components that drive the university’s Planning and Budget process that begins each January: (1) the *Annual Update of the USP*, (2) the Consolidated Academic Plan, and (3) the Consolidated Academic Support Plan. Each of these three inputs is connected to the 6-year academic program reviews to assure that priorities identified in the program reviews receive the university’s focused attention. For example, program reviews might identify needs or opportunities that align well within one of the key strategies the university is pursuing as an institution. In this case, and assuming the benefit is broad enough to drive the issue into the USP, access to the Planning and Budget process is via the *Annual Update of the USP*. Alternatively, an issue raised in a 6-year program review might be focused such that it is a better fit within a College’s input to the Consolidated Academic Plan. If an item from a program review focuses on support from a division other than academic affairs, it could be included in the Academic Support Plan. If an issue raised in a program review involves either physical facilities or donor funding, it would be included in the Physical Development Plan or the University Advancement Plan, respectively.

Administrative Program Reviews

Each Vice President has established a review process for their units at least every

seven years (Appendix E, *Administrative and Academic-Support Review Process*). Unit reviews usually include comparisons with peer units at other universities and specific action plans to improve quality and efficiency. For units where services may be provided by the private sector, 6-year reviews also include comparisons with the private sector. Reviews must also show quality of service as indicated by customer evaluation, cost, and centrality to the University's mission.

Budget Development – Resources to Implement Plans

Planning and budgeting occurs at two operational levels: (1) the unit where the majority of the University's resources reside, and (2) the University level, which allocates incremental E&G Fund increases and reallocations to institutional priorities identified during the Planning and Budget Hearings. Both the unit-level and central planning and budgeting activities consider the same inputs and goals:

- Academic and Academic Support Program Reviews;
- The *Context for Planning*;
- The University Diversity Plan;
- The *Annual Update of the USP*, which includes the *Ten-Year Physical Development Plan*, University & College/Unit Development Campaign Priorities, and the KS/IPs;
- The Board, Legislative and CCHE requirements such as the Board's Strategic Areas of Emphasis, Legislative Quality Indicators for Higher Education, and CCHE programs and policies; and
- Such other considerations of extraordinary need or opportunity as may arise during the course of operations.

This budget development process provides participants with shared understandings and commonality of reference points throughout all operational levels of the institution. This is essential for maintaining the focus necessary for achieving University goals in terms most relevant to our constituencies.

External Environment

Effective planning must consider external factors that are not within the institution's control so that unique opportunities and challenges can be creatively addressed. Three areas of challenges that are closely related to the major institutional issues identified in this self-study will be discussed. They are the availability of state financial resources, higher education policies in Colorado, and changing demographics of Coloradans participating in higher education.

Financial Resources

State Budget and Revenue Constraints

In Colorado, a remarkable combination of statutory and constitutional provisions mandates the ratcheting up of some expenditures while simultaneously ratcheting down revenue. The balanced budget provisions of the constitution prohibit the long run deficit that this combination builds into the State budget. The major provisions impacting the current fiscal crisis in Colorado and subsequent limited and reduced General Fund appropriations to CSU, as well as the limits placed on the institution's ability to generate revenue, are discussed in this section.

Gallagher Amendment

The Gallagher Amendment, approved by voters in 1982, controls property taxes by restricting the percentage of residential property assessed value to 45% of the total assessed property value. All other property makes up the difference. As a result, the taxable value of residential property (which has now grown to 75% of actual property value in Colorado) remains essentially constant during periods of stability and growth, resulting in the lowering of the assessment rate from 21% in 1995 to 7.96% in 2003 in order to maintain this ratio. Other constitutional provisions discussed below ratchet down the base for property taxes when assessed value falls, limit increases in property tax revenue that can be generated, and force the State to compensate by providing an even larger portion of public school funding from general revenue.

General Fund Appropriation Limit

The Bird-Arveschoug law, enacted by the General Assembly in 1992, limits the growth in General Fund expenditures to 6% from the previous year without provision for adjustment for population or economic growth in the State. As a result, General Fund (base budget) increases in excess of 6% that may be required for State or Federal mandated programs must be offset by increases of less than 6% in other programs. General Fund revenues collected in excess of the limit may be retained by the State and held in reserve or spent on capital construction.

TABOR

TABOR is a constitutional amendment enacted by citizen initiative in 1992. The four most significant provisions of TABOR are that it: (1) prohibits the imposition of any new tax or increase of any tax without voter approval for both state and local taxes; (2) limits the State's revenue growth to the sum of inflation (household-consumer prices) plus population growth in the previous calendar year; (3) limits the amount of revenue the State can spend

(transfer to a savings account is defined as spending) because any excess revenues (state or local) must be refunded to the taxpayers unless the voters approve otherwise; and (4) limits taxation options by prohibiting new taxes, limiting implementation of tax changes, and incorporates other State and local spending limitations into the constitution by prohibiting the weakening of any existing spending limitation, including Bird-Arveschoug law, and statutory limitations on public school revenue growth.

The adoption of TABOR declared that tuition paid to higher education institutions would be considered part of the overall state revenue limit. Thus, the General Assembly has to take tuition revenue into consideration in conjunction with all of the other activities of state government. When higher education tuition revenue increases, the State must reduce revenue in other areas during a year when state revenues would be in excess of TABOR limits.

Under TABOR, a government-owned business with bonding authority that receives less than 10% of its funding from state and local government revenue is classified as an enterprise. All auxiliaries and a few other units of the University have been converted to enterprise status, which provides more flexible financial management.

The most significant impact of TABOR on CSU has been the limitation on raising tuition and the ceiling on other cash funds that are considered to be state revenue. CSU tuition increases have, in general, been less than one-half of those of peer institutions, and while this seemingly provides benefits for students and their parents, it has impacted the institution's ability to raise revenue to address critical expenditure priorities. Consequently, it negatively impacts the quality of educational programs. The effects of TABOR have been widely analyzed and discussed. The Bell Policy Center recently finished a yearlong study of TABOR and concluded there was no evidence that TABOR contributed to the State's economic growth during the 1990's. Because it doesn't allow growth in state government to keep pace with economic growth, it did little to help the State and is too restrictive and too complicated, thus making it difficult for the State to recover from economic hard times. Throughout the State, the issue of TABOR is not as significant as it was shortly after its passage, as most local political entities have voted exemptions to its revenue growth and spending limitations, consistent with the provisions contained in the constitutional amendment.

Amendment 23

The voters approved Amendment 23 in 2000. This measure requires public school budgets to increase each year at a rate equal to inflation plus 1 percent, without any allowance for decreasing state revenue. When enacted, this mandate was exempted from TABOR provisions and it was presumed that these funds would come from the TABOR surplus, thereby reducing the TABOR refund to taxpayers. However, with the present economic downturn and declining state revenues, there is no surplus so the General Fund must pay for

the mandated increases that will continue to ratchet up this base budget.

Colorado Homestead Act

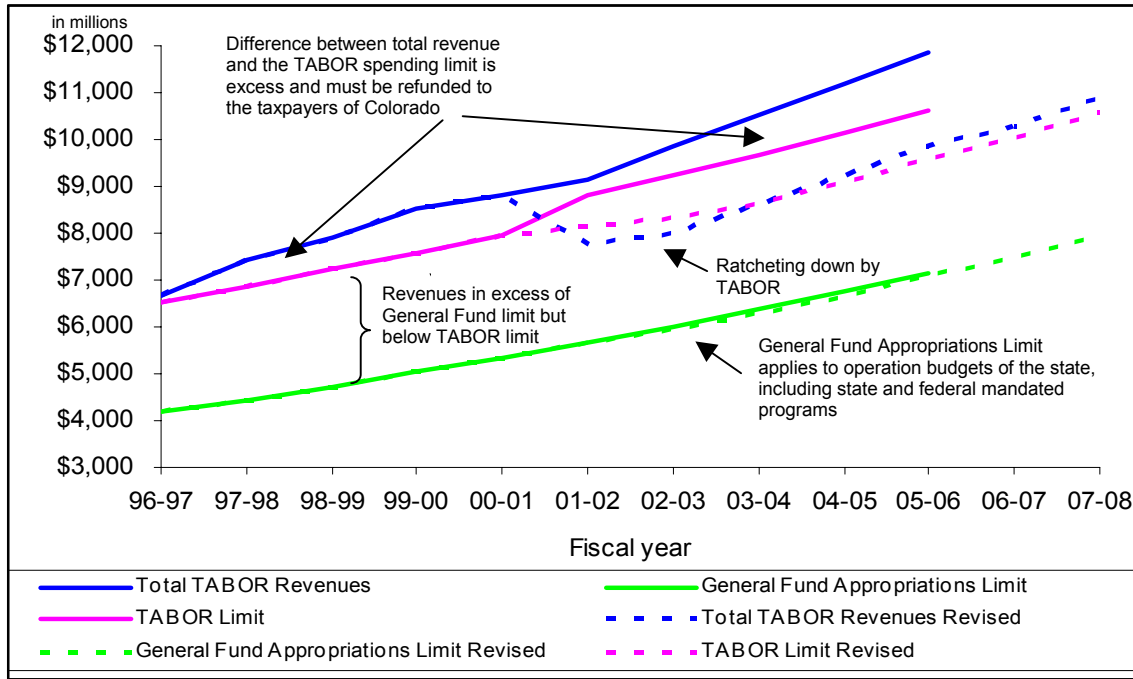
An adjustment to senior resident's property taxes resulted from voter approval of the Colorado Homestead Act in 2000, also known as Referendum A. Seniors age 65 years or older who have been living in their home for 10 or more years as their primary residence may be eligible for a 50% reduction in property taxes on the first \$200,000 assessed value of the home. This reduction in revenue was supposed to be offset by the TABOR surplus, but without any surplus, the General Fund must now absorb the difference.

State Revenue and Spending Projections

Figure 11-6 attempts to illustrate the impact of these complex provisions on the State financial situation. As shown, the Bird-Arveschoug law (General Fund Appropriations Limit) restricts growth during times of economic growth and increased revenue. However, the legislature appears to have interpreted the 6% cap as a floor rather than a ceiling on growth in General Fund expenditures resulting in highly volatile non-general fund spending (capital construction) from year to year. The TABOR revenue limit has capped spending and prevented rainy-day savings by requiring that excess funds be refunded. In the past, the legislature chose to retain the TABOR surplus revenue generated in the current year in the General Fund reserve, and to finance rebates from the surplus revenue generated in the following year. With the economic downturn and reduction in state revenues, the State was required to finance taxpayer rebates from reductions in state spending, thus compounding the effect of reduced revenues. The revenues in excess of the General Fund Appropriation Limit but within the TABOR spending limit are used to fund capital construction, emergency reserves, and savings to meet future state needs. The difference between these two limits was markedly reduced during the economic downturn. It is projected to be FY07 before any significant amounts of money are available for capital construction. On a statewide basis the most significant actions (FY03 and forward) have resulted from Amendment 23 (increased public school funding) and Referendum A (property tax relief for senior citizens), which forced greater cuts to other services and programs, because without any TABOR surplus, the General Fund must pay for them.

Most importantly, the figure illustrates how TABOR permanently ratchets down the State's spending base when revenue falls, thus preventing an "economic rebound" when the economy recovers. This combination of provisions reduces the State's budget-making flexibility, prohibits the State from starting a rainy-day fund, and places higher education in the position of being a discretionary budget item that cannot compete with mandated program increases and earmarked funds.

Figure 11-6. Projected revenue and spending limitations.



Source: Tom Dunn, Colorado State Legislative Council, Feb. 2001 and Sept. 2002

State Economy and General Fund Revenue

The State’s budgetary shortfalls are primarily the result of two years of declining General Fund revenues (Table 11-2) rather than the result of TABOR. Since state revenues fell below the TABOR limit in FY02 and FY03, the TABOR limit was not binding and the State could – and did – keep all of the money it collected. Meanwhile, the budget deficits that occurred in those two fiscal years were the result of state expenditures that were not reduced enough to compensate for the decline in the amount of revenues collected.

In March 2002, the State's revenue forecasts predicted revenues would be down for the remainder of that year but would rise again in FY03. The General Assembly approved FY03 General Fund appropriations on the basis of that March forecast. By June 2002, the economic forecast for both FY02 and FY03 revenue decreased dramatically.

Although the General Fund revenue base fell significantly during FY02, the General Fund expenditure base was not similarly reduced. Instead, the General Assembly maintained FY02 operating expenditures at

Table 11-2. Colorado General Fund revenue estimates* by Office of State Planning and Budgeting (Dollar amounts in millions).

Date of Estimate	FY01	%	FY02	%	FY03	%	FY04	%
Dec, 2001	\$6716.8	6.6	\$6450.6	-4.0	\$6881.9	6.7	\$7331.6	6.5
Mar, 2002	\$6716.8	6.6	\$6027.7	-9.7	\$6623.3	9.2	\$7091.2	7.1
June 2002	\$6716.8	6.6	\$5787.2	-13.8	\$6254.3	8.1	\$6640.5	6.2
Dec, 2002			\$5844.4	-13.0	\$5751.9	-1.6	\$6142.8	6.8
Mar, 2003			\$5844.4	-13.0	\$5666.3	-3.0	\$6004.5	6.0
June 2003			\$5836.7	-13.1	\$5587.7	-4.3	\$5832.7	4.4
Sept, 2003					\$5665.4	2.9	\$5907.5	4.3

*Estimate by Fiscal Year with Percent Change Over Prior Year

their original levels, relying on \$1.1 billion of one-time money to augment General Fund revenues and finance appropriations. In response to the revenue forecast in June 2002, the Governor enacted a 4% rescission in FY03 General Fund budgets before FY03 even started.

Because the rate of growth in General Fund appropriations was not lowered, the General Fund for FY03 and beyond carried a structural deficit even though the revenue situation improved over the forecast period. However, subsequent economic forecasts (December 2002 and March 2003) continued to deteriorate so the General Assembly was forced to take further action by reducing FY03 and FY04 appropriations and enhancing revenue through cash fund transfers. Furthermore, the State was required to fund the constitutionally mandated increases in public education (Amendment 23) and Referendum A, meet the statutory four percent reserve requirement, and reduce expenditures through base reductions in discretionary areas, such as higher education, to produce a balanced budget and reduce the shortfalls in subsequent years.

As a result, the higher education appropriation in Colorado was reduced 26.1% from \$697,536,273 in FY03 to \$515,177,556 in FY04. Higher education's share of the General Fund has eroded from 20.9% in FY88 to 10.6% in the FY04 appropriations bill. As reported by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 8, 2003), Colorado experienced the largest budget reduction for higher education funding of any state in FY04. The next closest public colleges were in Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Wisconsin with reductions of approximately 10% each. There is still a risk that the national economy will not resume robust growth in the near term. The recovery of Colorado's economy will likely be delayed for several months after the national economy rebounds, so the future is still uncertain.

Legislative and CCHE Policies

In response to the concerns of the citizens of Colorado, the Governor, Colorado General Assembly and CCHE attempt to keep the cost of higher education as low as possible, increase accessibility to all residents, and improve the efficiency of completing a course of study.

Accountability

The Colorado General Assembly has long been attentive to accountability measures in the State's institutions of higher education. In 1985, HB85-1187 called for institutions to design systematic programs to assess the knowledge, capabilities, and skills developed by their students. As a result, CSU was lauded in the 1994 NCA Evaluation Team Report for being "in many ways ahead of other universities of comparable size" in outcomes assessment. Subsequently, several laws were enacted to further develop accountability measures.

In 1991, HB91-1002 was passed which resulted in the identification of five major areas upon which higher education was to focus. These included accommodating enrollment growth, providing high quality undergraduate education, assisting K-12 reform, preparing undergraduates for the workforce, and using technology more effectively to reduce the unit cost of education, improve marketability of graduates and enhance distance education. HB94-1110 and SB93-136 revised these major areas into five “policy areas,” or long term goals for higher education, as standards upon which incentive funding was to be based. During the 1996 legislative session, SB93-136 was repealed and HB96-1219, the Higher Education Quality Assurance Act, declared five statewide goals for higher education and called for QIS whose measurement would reveal how well institutions met the goals. During the 1999 legislative session, three bills provided major revisions to accountability requirements. SB99-229, while retaining the five statewide goals, revised the QIS to focus more directly on specific objectives and authorized CCHE to reward or penalize financially institutional performance.

While QIS reports have addressed legislators’ desire for annual accountability reports comparing the relative performance of Colorado’s 28 institutions of higher education, the process has tended to drive institutions into an institutional data and report generating mode and away from assessment of student learning for use in programmatic decision-making. Still, it is important to note that CSU was the only university in Colorado to meet all the state-set standards (quality benchmarks) in 2001 for four-year universities. However, the performance-based funding rewards to CSU resulting from this system were insignificant (approximately \$10,000). In the second year of QIS, scoring was based on benchmark points plus bonus points. This past year, scoring was a combination of benchmark points, bonus points, and improvement points. Improvement points were sufficient in magnitude that they could advance a low benchmark institution to a higher score than the highest quality institutions.

Accessibility and Efficiency

Two general education mandates passed in the 2001 legislative session, HB 01-1263 and HB 01-1298, were based on the belief that general education courses are key to every student’s academic success. The General Assembly charged CCHE with ensuring that the general education curriculum for all undergraduate degree programs provides the knowledge and skills that develop clear and effective communication, technology skills, and stimulate students’ critical thinking ability. Each public college and university has adopted a general education core curriculum for its undergraduates that differs in scope, number of courses, and design, ranging from 33 required credits in general education to 49 required general education credits. This diversity creates transfer barriers. CCHE has proposed the creation of a general

education framework and development of common course numbering for general education courses. The expected project outcomes include: (1) ensuring that Colorado undergraduate students receive a general education experience of consistent and high quality regardless of their major or area of study; (2) protecting students' rights regarding the transfer of general education courses; (3) facilitating transfer from 2- to 4-year institutions, among 4-year institutions, from 4- to 2-year institutions, and within an institution; (4) enhancing academic advising; (5) ensuring quality in curriculum development and consistency in course competencies; and (6) providing students online information regarding general education course transferability and common course numbers <www.state.co.us/cche/gened/overview.pdf>. The implementation of these mandates has been complicated by the varied interpretations of intent. It is clear that this initiative will require close monitoring by CSU as it evolves so the institution will be able to anticipate and adjust to the challenges.

Another challenge coming from CCHE was the proposed limitation on undergraduate degree requirements to 120 credits. This proposed reduction comes at the same time that professional societies and specialized accreditation agencies are pushing for more content in the curriculum. For COE, the challenge of packaging an acceptable engineering curriculum into a smaller number of credits poses significant problems that are going to require some innovative solutions.

In January 2003, the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Higher Education for the 21st Century (a select group of citizens and leaders of the State appointed in August 2001 to serve at the pleasure of the Governor) completed a review and discussion of the future of higher education in Colorado with a recommendation that higher education be funded through a voucher system (*Final Blue Ribbon Report*, <www.state.co.us/cche/blueribbon/final.html>). Representing a major paradigm shift, the voucher funding system, if implemented, would be the first such system in the country. The panel reviewed demographic changes in the State, participation and access rates of Colorado students to higher education, and state funding and tuition levels. The panel concluded that increasing participation for all Colorado students is a significant goal and that funding policies must be changed to assure greater participation. The panel recommended that the State adopt a new funding system. Currently a state subsidy is allocated directly to colleges and universities based on student enrollment; the new plan would redirect the funding from institutions directly to students. The new funding model, as originally proposed, would direct state funds to undergraduates at \$133 per credit hour or about \$4,000 per year for a full-time student. Graduate I students (master's level) would receive a stipend of \$267 per credit hour or \$8,000 per year. "Role and Mission" block grants were recommended for funding graduate II (PhD) programs and other unique programs. A credit limit cap would be placed on undergraduates at 140 semester hours and master's level graduate students at 60 semester hours. Students who exceed this cap would pay the

equivalent of state support plus tuition. In addition to enhancing participation, particularly among low-income students, the objectives of the voucher system are to give colleges and universities more flexibility and discretion in raising funds and to increase competition among institutions that will lead to stronger programs. The proposal, referred to as the College Opportunity Fund, was introduced with modification as a bill in the 2003 General Assembly and subsequently withdrawn; however, reconsideration is expected in future sessions of the General Assembly. This proposal holds the potential to significantly influence students' choices of public institutions of higher education in Colorado and the resulting operating budgets of the institutions.

Another goal of the proposed College Opportunity Fund was to exempt some higher education governing boards from TABOR restrictions by qualifying for enterprise status. State statutes would have to be changed to exempt student tuition from TABOR restrictions. Tuition could then be considered a type of user-fee, reflecting the cost of the service. No other state has implemented a broad-based voucher program of this type for higher education, so the policy implications of such a move are difficult to predict.

Coloradans' Participation in Higher Education

As a land-grant institution, CSU is committed to increased access and opportunities for all Coloradans in higher education. As enrollment management decisions are made, demographic trends in the State must be considered and strategically addressed.

Changing Demographics

By the turn of the 21st century, Colorado was one of the wealthiest, most highly educated and fastest-growing states in the nation. During the 1990s, Colorado rose from 20th to among the top 10 states in per capita income. For one period of time, Colorado was the only state west of the Mississippi River with that distinction. Throughout the decade, Colorado retained its first or second rank as the most highly educated population determined by the percentage of people over age 25 with a bachelor's degree. It was the third-fastest growing state (after Nevada and Arizona) between census dates 1990 to 2000, rising by over 30%, from 3,294,394 in 1990 to 4,401,261 in 2000. While actual dollars increased, higher education's share of the State's General Fund declined during this period, falling from 19% in 1991 to less than 14% in 2001.

The rate of participation of Colorado's high school students in higher education has been tabulated in a variety of ways. During the past two decades Colorado has been at or near the top of states with an adult population holding at least a bachelor's degree. The State's economy, natural beauty and lifestyle have served to attract highly educated people to Colorado from throughout the nation and the world. Colorado fares poorly in sending its own

high school freshmen to higher education institutions. In the national report, *Measuring Up 2000*, Colorado placed 31st among the states with only 38% of its high school freshmen entering higher education four years later. The latest report, *Measuring Up 2002*, puts Colorado in a tie for 27th with 39% going on within four years of being high school freshmen. However, 53% of high school graduates enter college within 12 months of graduation. When the 12-month constraint is removed, 94% of Colorado high school graduates eventually enter higher education (Colorado ranks 6th). The State is surprisingly among the highest in terms of Coloradans over age 25 participating in higher education, with nearly 5% of that age group or over 80,000 students enrolling in a public or private postsecondary institution.

Table 11-3. Colorado population of 18-24 year-olds enrolled in a Colorado public institution of higher education.

Ethnicity	Male		Female	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
White, Non-Hispanic	31%	28%	32%	34%
African-American	14%	17%	16%	22%
Hispanic	14%	9%	15%	15%
Total	28%	29%	23%	29%

Source: *Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Higher Education for the 21st Century*.

While Colorado's population increased at a rapid rate during the 1990s, student enrollment at Colorado public institutions of higher education grew substantially less (Table 11-3). Perhaps most telling is that total undergraduate headcount enrollment increased from 170,814 in 1991 to 182,492 in 2001, a gain of 6.8%. Resident FTE enrollment rose by 9.6%, from 111,977 in 1990 to 122,707 in 2000. These statistics indicate that a substantial number of Coloradans are not participating in higher education and as a result our citizens are not fully benefiting from the current system. Non-Hispanic white and Hispanic males recorded decreases. The relative stagnation or even decline in male college enrollment is an important issue for higher education in Colorado.

Table 11-4. Percent of teens who are high school dropouts ages 16-19, 1998.

Colorado and Peer States		
Rank	State	Percent
1	Nevada	17%
1	Arizona	17%
3	Colorado	13%
3	Oregon	13%
19	Illinois	9%
19	California	9%
19	Connecticut	9%
43	Minnesota	6%
48	Wisconsin	5%

Source: *Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Higher Education for the 21st Century*.

Note: State data are based on four-year continuous enrollment. This is the percentage of teenagers between 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates.

Participation in higher education depends in some measure on a state's number of high school graduates. Table 11-4 shows Colorado's high school dropout rate and a number of other states with a high percentage of high school dropouts in 1998.

The growth in the number of Hispanics in the State has been significant. While Colorado showed a 31% population increase during the 1990s, the State's Hispanic population grew by over 73% and its proportion in the population grew from 13% to 17%. This percentage gain was the largest among ethnic groups. Colorado's non-Hispanic white population grew 21% during the decade. This group accounted for 81% of the State's population in 1990 and 75% in 2000. The State's non-Hispanic black population rose by nearly 24%, although the proportion of blacks in the State declined from 3.9% to 3.7%.

Although Colorado enjoys higher college participation rates than the national averages, this status is tempered by at least three facts. First, Colorado's advantage over the rest of the nation has declined during the 1990s. Second, incomes in Colorado are greater than the nation as a whole. According to 1998

data from the Census Bureau, median household income in Colorado was \$46,599, 20% greater than the national average and 28% greater than the average of the seven neighboring states. Nationally, there is a strong relationship between income and college participation. All other things being equal, individuals from upper-income families attend college at higher rates than do those from lower-income families. Thus, one would expect Colorado to have higher participation rates, based on its position as a relatively high-income state. Third, Colorado has fewer underrepresented minorities than the nation as a whole. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2000) indicate that approximately 26% of public K-12 students in Colorado are African American, Hispanic, or Native American, groups that have historically been underrepresented in higher education (particularly in 4-year institutions). The corresponding national figure is 33%. Table 11-5 shows that Colorado students from lower-income families do not participate in higher education at rates comparable to national norms.

Table 11-5. Chance for college for students from lower-income families, 1992-2000.

Rank	State	Fall 2000	Fall 1992
7	Minnesota	35.7%	48.4%
13	Wisconsin	29.7%	36.8%
17	Illinois	24.6%	23.4%
21	Connecticut	23.3%	17.2%
26	California	22.2%	16.5%
39	Oregon	19.1%	14.3%
41	Colorado	17.1%	16.4%
46	Arizona	15.6%	16.3%
47	Nevada	14.3%	15.4%
National Average		23.1%	20.0%

Source: *Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Higher Education for the 21st Century*.

Any examination of higher education funding must include analysis of tuition levels. In a report to the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel (October, 2000) entitled *Tuition Pricing and Higher Education Participation in Colorado*, Dr. Donald Heller noted that higher prices lead to lower enrollment. According to Dr. Heller, tuition is more powerful than financial aid in influencing enrollment. Lower-income students are more price sensitive. However, price is only one of a number of factors involved in a student's choice to attend college. The Heller report also indicates that other factors, when taken together, tend to play a much more important role in influencing college enrollment behavior. These factors include the student's academic aptitude and achievement; course-taking patterns in high school and earlier grades; the role of parents, sibling, peers, and other in promoting college as a post-high school option; proximity of postsecondary education institutions; and economic conditions such as the status of the local economy and labor markets.

Twenty years ago, Colorado would have been considered a mid- to high-tuition state. Tuition prices in many of Colorado's public institutions of higher education were well above the national averages. The last two decades, however, have seen important changes in tuition prices in Colorado when compared to the national trends. Over the ensuing 20 years, other states increased their tuition prices at a higher rate than did Colorado, so that by last year, state college tuition in Colorado was only 80% of the national median.

As a result of the demographic changes and the participation rate of both high school graduates and low-income students, for CSU to achieve its goals of increased access and opportunities for Coloradans in higher education, the following challenges must be addressed:

- Increasing retention and graduation rates in Colorado high schools;
- Increasing participation of recent high school graduates in higher education;
- Encouraging participation of currently underrepresented groups in higher education; and
- Increasing the participation/retention and graduation rates in higher education, particularly of those in the bottom income quartile.

Politically, the State of Colorado has become very price sensitive regarding the funding of higher education and raising tuition. The Blue Ribbon panel came to the conclusion that changing the higher education funding policy to vouchers would be the best fix for low participation in Colorado and the Governor is now limiting tuition increases because they “reduce access.” However, participation rates are not keeping pace with other states where tuition has increased. Clearly other strategies must be considered in Colorado. Although financial aid dollars generally do not generate as large an enrollment response as do tuition changes, the targeting of specific populations for aggressive financial aid and enrollment management policies seems to be a more prudent approach than limiting tuition increases. In addition to considering more targeted uses of financial aid (as an alternative to broad-scale tuition reductions), CSU must continue to examine non-financial outreach, K-12 interrelationships, recruitment, academic support, and retention programs for underrepresented populations.

Admissions Window and Student Success

CSU’s admissions policies and practices are well-aligned to its mission and goals, especially given the University’s land-grant mission, which mandates a significant focus on student access. CSU’s Admissions Index of 101 is the third highest in the State. While it is important to be concerned with the academic preparation of all students, this concern must be balanced against the University’s obligation to the State to educate and train a future workforce and future leaders – and to support the economic vitality of the State of Colorado. CSU has many unique majors and programs. Colorado residents who are not able to enroll in unique programs offered through CSU often have no option but to seek out-of-state opportunities – which is only a viable option to the extent they can support the higher cost for out-of-state enrollment.

Admissions Standards and Index Windows

CCHE, in consultation with governing board representatives and members of the Admission Standards Working Committee, establish policies and priorities for admissions to public institutions of higher education in Colorado. Current goals include:

- Reducing the “window” – the percent of admitted students who do not meet the institutional admission index;
- Requiring all applicants to four-year colleges to attain a minimum high school GPA;
- Defining the freshmen admission standard to include a specified index score OR high school GPA or ACT/SAT score;
- Identifying a recommended high school curriculum; and
- Specifying an index “floor” for the “window.”

CCHE’s admission Selectivity Guidelines define five levels: open enrollment, modified open, moderately selective, selective, and highly selective. CSU had been designated as a “selective” admissions standards institution, defined as competitive admission to high school graduates with an index score that meets or exceeds the institutional admission index, or who earns the specified high school GPA or specified ACT score. The minimum index score is 90.

Student Success

CSU annually analyzes a comprehensive array of information about its admission decisions and the resulting student performance. As a result of these reviews, the University has changed admission practices, refocused admission goals and reevaluated resulting changes in student performance. Such analysis has consistently shown student index scores have a strong positive relationship to undergraduate GPA, time to graduation, and overall graduation rate. The data also indicate there is a range of students, with index scores from 95 to 109, whose performance is quite similar and who have typically been highly successful at CSU. Research indicates this pattern has been consistent since the entering class of 1986. Index scores do not totally determine a student’s chance for success at CSU – student interest in the institution and program of study, motivation, drive, hard work and support can all be major factors. Nevertheless, general patterns indicate the better-prepared students are when they come to CSU, as evidenced by their index scores, the higher the probability of their success.

As a result of these analyses, reviews and decisions, CSU has significantly improved the average index score of entering freshmen (from 105 in Fall 1990 to 110 in Fall 2003), substantially increased the number of freshmen with index scores above 110, substantially reduced the number of freshmen with index scores below 90, and improved overall 4-, 5- and 6- year graduation rates.

Early research indicated, on average, that students with an admissions index lower than 90 did not have an adequate level of preparation to be successful at CSU. As a result, the University put an index “floor” of 90 on its admissions decisions and only admits students below that level if they have other substantial indicators of potential for success. Statewide

data show that, regardless of index score, resident students have a significantly higher probability of graduation if they attend one of the four larger residential campuses (CSU, CU-Boulder, UNC or the School of Mines) than if they attend any of the other four-year institutions in the State. Indeed, at any index level, the graduation rates for the four larger residential campuses are two to three times the level of the smaller 4-year colleges. Similarly, the 1999 QIS analysis reveals significant differences in success rates between the smaller regional four-year institutions and their peers.

These observations raise important questions about the relationships between student success and student and institutional characteristics. Such considerations can be expected to be most important in public policy decisions about admissions standards and window sizes. Several items are probably important to any comparative discussion of an admissions window. First, less than half of the states have set any formal limits on the number of students who may be admitted who do not meet stated admission requirements – that is, only 24 states have admission restrictions similar to those in Colorado. Second, to fully understand these specific limits on the number of exceptions to admission requirements, it is necessary to understand the level of the admissions requirements themselves. The admission cut-off points for Colorado’s four highest-tier institutions are quite high compared with the limits placed on comparable institutions in other states. Colorado’s balance of a higher admissions cut-off point and larger “window” of exceptions in many cases provides the same level of access to the State’s top-tier institutions as do other states with a lower cut-off point for automatic admission and a smaller window for exceptions. In numerous other cases, however, Colorado’s combination of index score and window percentage already places far more restrictions on access to the State’s comprehensive institutions than occurs in other states. For example, Kansas State is a peer institution for CSU in many respects. Although Kansas State only has a 10% window for exceptions to its admission requirements, qualification for regular admission only requires the equivalent of a 77 index score (and, in fact, Kansan students can be regularly admitted with scores much lower than that). A 77 index score is a lower cutoff than any four-year institution in Colorado, but Kansas State has a 10% window for exceptions on top of that. Utah provides another example: While Utah only allows a 5% window for admission exceptions, the cutoff for regular admission to the University of Utah or to Utah State is equal to a 94 index on the Colorado scale – well below the cut-off point for CSU (101 index score).

CCHE has recently adopted new admissions policies that include a mandatory pre-collegiate curriculum for students currently in the eighth grade, a recalibrated admissions index, and a reduction in the size of CSU’s window by 2010. These changes have potential to modify the profile of resident students admitted to CSU in the future and will require careful monitoring.

Key Strengths

- **Colorado State University has a lengthy record of established strategic planning and program review processes whereby it maintains strengths, addresses concerns, and advances the quality of learning.**

The University has developed a comprehensive planning process that integrates plans from all sectors of the campus into the annual cycles of planning and budgeting. Program reviews are regularly conducted for all academic and administrative programs. These patterns of evidence suggest that CSU can continue to accomplish its purposes and fulfill the requirements of Criterion Four.

- **The University is committed to improving its educational effectiveness through a process of systematic and comprehensive annual outcomes assessment.**

The University has made significant progress in developing the capacity to continuously evaluate and improve academic programs through hiring a Director of Assessment, appointing of an academic assessment peer review committee, and designing a comprehensive assessment system for the university.

Challenges and Opportunities

- **Colorado State University faces challenges and uncertainties in the level of General Fund support that will be provided by the State of Colorado.**

Although all public institutions of higher education can claim that they are not fully funded, the situation in Colorado is unique. The combination of the economic downturn and state fiscal rules have significantly reduced higher education funding in Colorado more than any other state; and unless modified, these rules will delay CSU's return to previous levels of public funding. In addition, a proposal to implement a voucher system for funding higher education in Colorado adds another degree of uncertainty to the funding picture. CSU must broaden its financial base through harvesting more revenue from development activities, cash-funded services, contracts and grants, and other non-General Fund sources. Current reductions in state-funded financial aid limit the University's ability to target disadvantaged residents and provide them with access to higher education.

- **Managing enrollment growth with limited resources requires establishing an integrated and strategic process for development of clear enrollment goals.**

Enrollment growth has been driven primarily by the need for additional revenue. There has been much discussion of many enrollment growth issues, but firm

resolution of few. With the University facing reduced revenue, mechanisms for determining the priority of issues and subsequent resolution must be refined. It is increasingly apparent that enrollment growth-related issues are closely linked to academic outcomes. Class size, advising capacity, student/faculty interaction, and a host of other facets of the academic process must be monitored.