

U n i v e r s i t y o f C o l o r a d o

V I S I O N | *Culture of*
2 0 1 0 | *Excellence*

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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
Vision 2010
A Culture of Excellence

I. CU Vision 2010

Vision 2010 is a bold, system-wide agenda intended to map the future of the University of Colorado (CU) for the next decade. Vision 2010 consists of five action areas:

- A University Without Walls
- A Culture of Excellence
- Increasing Resources and Using Them Wisely
- Diversity
- An Integrated Infrastructure

II. Charge for Culture of Excellence Initiative

The charge of the committee is: (1) to define more fully the attributes of a culture of excellence within the University; (2) to propose goals (outcomes) for the system that advance CU toward a culture of excellence; and (3) to propose accountability measures and benchmarks for these goals.

President Hoffman has selected a goal of enhanced excellence for CU, using an established yardstick of excellence. This goal is that the University of Colorado system will be among the finest universities in the United States and, specifically, that it will be the number one U.S. public research university, as measured by federal research funding. Each of the campuses has also set a measurable goal. The Boulder campus aspires to be in the top 10% of AAU public institutions without a medical school. The Colorado Springs campus aims to be the number one comprehensive regional institution with enrollment of 10,000 to 12,000 students. The Denver campus aspires to be among the top ten urban research universities. And the Health Sciences Center aims to be the number one “stand alone” public health sciences center in the country.

III. Introduction

A culture of excellence encompasses an expectation of excellence at all levels of the University: faculty, staff, students and administrators. It is the committee’s opinion that excellence has many definitions and those definitions are dependent on the cultures and missions at the separate campuses. However, there are common themes of excellence. At the University of Colorado, faculty, staff, students and administrators are all held to high standards. The University cultivates the leadership abilities and strengths of the members of the University community and is focused on the recruitment and retention of outstanding and diverse people. The committee agrees that the University has already embraced many of the values presented in this report; those identified here are particularly important aspects of excellence. The recommendations in Section IV describe a functioning culture of excellence. The committee also agrees that a key part of each element of the CU Vision 2010 goals should involve an effort to achieve excellence.

IV. A Culture of Excellence in All Areas of University Life

1. Leadership: A Key to Excellence

- **Excellence:** As in all other areas of the University, the administration consists of the most qualified and dedicated individuals. National searches for top ranks are the norm; a national search is often the best way to find outstanding talent. Administrators and faculty are held to the same high standards.
- **Setting the goals:** There is a strategic plan for the entire enterprise; there is a shared vision. The leadership:
 - Involves staff, students, and faculty in developing goals.
 - Clearly communicates the goals to the entire community.
 - Rewards efforts made to achieve the goals.
 - Moves beyond dependence on external rankings to objectives for excellence that we create and own.
- **Hold and articulate high standards:** The quality of the students, staff, and faculty is the foundation of excellence. People, not buildings, are the University. Excellent universities have institutionalized high standards in hiring staff, recruiting and retaining faculty, and enrolling and retaining students.
 - High standards are set and clearly articulated for students, staff, and faculty.
 - Excellence is regularly recognized and rewarded by the leadership
- **Build trust through communication:** University relationships are based on trust, without which progress is impossible. If members of the University community do not buy into policies and programs, they will not work.
 - The Administration communicates with and empowers faculty and administrative staff to make important decisions about excellence, not just to respond to administrative rules.
 - The Administration involves experts in the field of Change Management when a massive change (such as the move to Fitzsimons) is contemplated. Such changes happen more smoothly when all constituencies are consulted and feel involved in the process.
- **Adequate infrastructure is vital:** The infrastructure of the University is of the highest quality. The better the infrastructure support, the better staff, students, and faculty can concentrate on developing and using their special skills. To retain excellence, programs have adequate space, infrastructure, staff and facilities support, operating budgets, and faculty.
 - Regarding technology, the University anticipates the future and does not just build for the present. This anticipation is particularly relevant to information systems in the classroom (e.g., intranet/Webcasting, wireless computing, video streaming, and video conferencing) and in research (e.g., high-end computation hardware for medicine, biology, physics, chemistry, computer sciences, engineering and math).
 - Great universities have great library resources and the services to ensure access and ease of use.

- Great universities have great core facilities. Research in many areas depends on shared core facilities that cannot be obtained by any individual faculty member and are accessible to all.
- The facilities of the University, its classroom and office buildings, laboratories and shops, residence halls and campus centers, playing fields and grounds, are maintained on a regular schedule to produce a safe and comfortable environment.
- **Target opportunities:** The administration develops the funding and has the flexibility to respond nimbly to new opportunities, including the recruitment and retention of outstanding people.
 - These funds are used only when it will make a difference and will advance the strategic plan.
 - The administration reports to the University community on what did work, and what didn't, so that there is accountability and trust.
 - Flexible funds are used actively to recruit, develop, and retain outstanding and diverse faculty.
- **Fundraising is crucial:** The leadership of the University is involved in fundraising efforts to foster the Culture of Excellence.
 - The administration, assisted by the faculty, works to engage the state and local governments in fund-raising efforts with foundations and corporations.
 - The CU Foundation works with departments and faculty in their efforts.
- **Building a Culture of Excellence is a continuing process:** An ongoing discussion of the Culture of Excellence is institutionalized. This discussion involves students, staff, faculty, administration, parents and alumni.
 - The process involves establishing retreats and a Web site and utilizing existing forums and publications for discussion and debate.
 - A prestigious, named, bi- or tri-ennial lecture series is created around this broad topic as is done at great universities (e.g., Norton Lectures at Harvard.)

2. Synergy and the University Family

- **There is a sense of community in a Culture of Excellence:** A community becomes cohesive when there is social as well as academic interaction.
 - Casual and collegial interactions between students, faculty, and administration, and between faculty and faculty, are the lifeblood of an institution of higher education. True synthetic thinking happens when people with different backgrounds start to talk.
 - Shared goals and interests help build cohesion and collective purpose that transcends individual ambition.
 - Places where these interactions take place — lounges, cafeterias, coffee areas — are as important as laboratories and seminar rooms.
 - CU is established as a place where a diverse faculty, staff, and student body works together as one family, with openness to different viewpoints, experiences, and aspirations.
- **Inclusiveness is necessary:** The best management happens when students and staff are included as voting members on all possible committees, so that the diverse community is represented.

- **Interactivity stretches resources:** When money is tight, working together can stretch dollars and produce new initiatives with minimal resources.
 - A model is considered in which all new faculty, during the hiring process, are encouraged and assisted in identifying individuals, either within their department or in other schools or on other campuses, with whom they will collaborate in research or other creative work. Established faculty are encouraged to, and rewarded for, partnering with new faculty.
 - Cross-disciplinary, multi-campus organizations, such as programs and interest groups, are not as expensive as formal research centers. They can apply to all disciplines, and can generate extraordinary new ideas and initiatives. These begin with a series of University-wide “conversations” about topics in which there may be general interest.
 - Consistent with the University Without Walls, intercampus collaborations can often create something extraordinary for little additional cost.
 - Interactivity among administrative units, such as academic advising, career services, counseling, and financial aid, can also stretch resources and solve problems.

3. Public Service and Community Outreach

- **Serving the community serves CU:** A strong focus on engagement with the community leads to a reciprocal engagement of the community with the University. The leadership takes advantage of what we have: seeks out and supports business, and business will support CU.
 - Existing programs that clearly link to community, state, and regional needs and interests are given high priority for support. A discussion should begin on what new programs might be encouraged.
- **Communicating excellent achievement to the community:** A significant part of being excellent is telling your public how you *are* excellent.
 - Public relations offices on all campuses have adequate resources to communicate this message expertly.
 - A program is initiated to help the public understand why a mediocre CU would never be good enough for Colorado. Our students and graduates will have a direct impact on all of our futures.
 - Opportunities are created for gathering comments from and listening to the public.
 - A superb systemwide Web site is established, where any department on any campus can be easily and logically located. The public is not very aware of the differences among our campuses; these differences are part of our strength.
 - Communication to the internal audience of faculty, staff and students about the efforts being addressed in the community is a high priority. Members of the University community are encouraged to volunteer, serve on advisory boards and participate in other activities in their communities.
- **Outreach is vital:** Outreach efforts involve legislators, alumni, parents, and the general public.

- CU serves as a source of expert advice for legislators. The administration actively develops this resource so that lobbyists and staffers can quickly locate the best possible advisors.
- Outreach to alumni is fostered, initially via a well-designed Web site, resulting in their increased involvement with CU, both intellectual and financial. Intellectual programs are developed for alumni at homecomings, in addition to athletic events. Alumni are invited to be part of the University, as they were challenged to be at commencement with the Norlin Charge. (See Appendix II.)
- New and innovative programs are developed for bringing CU's message to as many members of the public as possible, in the most effective ways. More diverse populations are included in the University's outreach programs.

4. Faculty

- **Teaching and research:** Faculty and students recognize that individual excellence in teaching and research are not impossible (meaning unable to exist if something else exists. Two things are impossible when the world of being has scope for one of them, but not enough for both.) The research university is predicated on the assumption that teaching and research are synergistic. In a Culture of Excellence, faculty members strive to be outstanding teachers, just as they strive to be outstanding researchers.
 - Teaching and research at the highest levels are encouraged, and the administration ensures that the necessary facilities are available.
 - Teaching by the most outstanding researchers is encouraged. The faculty believes that teaching, like research, is a collective responsibility. Travel funds to teaching conferences are available and faculty are assisted in building their teaching skills.
 - Faculty are rewarded for achieving balance between their teaching and research or creative careers.
 - Junior faculty are encouraged and supported in becoming outstanding teachers and researchers. Early career stages are critical, and new faculty must be supported in establishing their careers. New President's and Chancellor's research and teaching awards for assistant professors and instructors are created.
 - The University recognizes that individual faculty members will have greater or lesser skills and interest in classroom teaching and research, and perfects the system of differentiated workloads that best reflects and profits from this diversity of talent.
 - All graduate students have the opportunity to learn how to be effective teachers. Graduate students are rewarded for taking on the teaching role, and time for teaching activities is protected.
- **Program leadership and recruitment:** Program leaders have national prominence, set the highest standards and expectations, and articulate their policies clearly.
 - Although program leaders have a primary responsibility to their units, they are also aware of and committed to the greater good of the University.

- The funding and workload bases in each unit are sufficiently well-balanced to preserve collegiality and cooperation, which can be threatened by the competitiveness engendered by inadequate resources.
- Every new hire makes the unit stronger than it was.
- The most diverse candidates are aggressively recruited and retained. Units are also supported so that they can “grow their own” diverse students and faculty.
- People are sought whose career goals are consistent with the University’s. Young faculty are included on search committees, perhaps even as chairs; they will have to live for the longest time with those being hired.
- **Mentors:** Senior faculty have specific roles in mentoring junior faculty.
 - The President’s Teaching Scholars and Distinguished Professors become more engaged in the mentoring of newly hired faculty.
 - Graduate students are also mentored by qualified faculty.
- **Pride:** The CU leadership develops among the faculty a strong sense of personal satisfaction in working at the University. Pride in the enterprise means that we are all happy when one of us does well. Faculty are willing to raise funds for their departments and the University, as well as for their own programs.

5. Staff and Infrastructure

- **Pride and respect:** The University has many outstanding staff employees and administrative units. Business operations of the University are excellently managed by staff employees — who are either members of the state classified personnel system or who are professional-exempt employees not included under state personnel rules.
 - The salary, employment and performance evaluation structures of these two personnel systems are reviewed and improved when needed. Supervisors get help in working effectively with employees under both systems.
 - Open communication in the workplace is essential.
- **Contribute to educational mission:** Staff members feel, first and foremost, that they are University employees. Many staff employees interact with students on a daily basis and are respected for their contributions to the educational mission of the University.
- **Reward for excellence:** Employees feel appreciated for a job well done, are part of decisions that affect them, do interesting and meaningful work, have professional development opportunities and are offered flexible work schedules.
 - Classified state employees and professional-exempt staff members are motivated to perform at high levels. The system administration establishes a strong University staff awards program. Staff honors and recognition are as important for staff as they are for faculty.
 - An assessment of excellence in the entire work force is conducted on a regular basis, using such measures as rates of retention and promotion, staff involvement on campus, participation in professional development and the diversity of the staff ranks.
- **Infrastructure and efficiency:** A well-maintained and top-notch infrastructure facilitates excellent work.

- Quality information technology (IT) support staff is maintained at each campus to provide IT services and instruction to faculty, staff and students.
- Departmental personnel get training and ongoing support in efficient use of the human resources and financial systems, so as to free up time for other duties.

6. Students and Learning

- **Student engagement is central to the Culture of Excellence:** All levels of teaching at CU become student-centered. To align faculty and student expectations, students are involved in course and class design.
 - Multiple opportunities for engagement (in and out of the classroom) are available and students *are* engaged. Undergraduate and graduate students become self-directed, self-confident, and responsible. Out-of-classroom engagement comes from service, learning, internships, student leadership, and other opportunities.
 - Training of students, especially graduate students, reflects the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary nature of work in the real world. The University Without Walls facilitates the opportunity for each student to find other people to talk to, work with, and learn from.
 - Students are challenged by their course of study. They know what is expected of them.
 - Students and faculty learn about modern theory and practice of students' self-image as learners: students understand that excellence comes from hard work; it is not inherent.
 - Students in all disciplines are involved in the creation as well as the acquisition of knowledge.
 - Students are proud to be part of CU.
 - Since students learn from their peers, a diverse student body is crucial to prepare all students for life in the "global village".
- **Training for excellence in teaching:** Because they will teach the next generation and already are teaching CU undergraduates, those graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who plan to teach receive excellent teaching instruction and practice.
 - All graduate students acquire a core set of written and oral communication skills.
 - CU identifies reliable methods to assess whether students are getting the education they deserve and whether they are well taught. CU takes the lead in developing standards that can be used to track educational outcomes.
 - Training for graduate students includes opportunities to learn about and prepare for careers in settings other than Research I universities.
- **Balance competition with cooperation:** Create an environment in which students collaborate and cooperate, and mentor each other.
 - Students compete against the material they are trying to learn, not their friends.
 - Competition is valuable where it is appropriate. The Culture of Excellence is built more upon the love of learning than the love of winning.
 - To decrease destructive competitiveness, instruction is criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced.

- Faculty treat students and teaching as opportunities, not burdens.
- The diversity among students in career goals and approaches to life is respected and encouraged.
- CU aspires to graduate citizens who are prepared to assume their role in our democratic society.

7. Identity and Tradition

- **CU's identity:** The University and each of its campuses possess a distinct personality, with which faculty, students, and staff can identify and of which they can be proud.
- **Pride in the accomplishments of the CU community:** Faculty take pride in their colleagues and students, nominate them for prestigious awards, prizes, memberships; this is routine for those already elected.
 - The achievements of faculty, staff, and students are celebrated at an appropriate level. There is a general sense of pride and ownership, and a feeling that a job well done will be recognized.
 - CU students who perform outstandingly in club sports are recognized. A CU Sports Hall of Fame is developed to include these non-professional student athletes, many of whom go on to great careers in sports and in other fields.
 - Equal energy is expended in recognizing those students who serve the University and the greater community in all areas: volunteering, politics, mentoring, creative work, teaching — just as faculty are recognized.
 - A CU Hall of Fame is established to honor graduates who have achieved distinction in all areas of life.
- **Traditions can foster excellence:** New traditions are developed, and old traditions resurrected, including a tradition of excellence.
 - The idea that CU is a special school in a special place is fostered.
 - Rituals appropriate to each campus are developed and supported. Commemorative windows and plaques are prominently displayed.
 - All faculty and students are expected to attend commencement, the quintessential celebration of the end of one educational journey and the beginning of another. These are made great occasions. Unique CU academic regalia and memorabilia may be created.

V. Next Steps

Each campus will review the contents of this report and determine which of its recommendations and characterizations of a Culture of Excellence will be most useful in enhancing that culture on the campus. The campuses may add campus-specific goals suited to achieving excellence that is consistent with their roles and missions.

Once the particular recommendations for action are selected (the action plan), the campus will develop benchmarks and measures to assess progress as the recommendations are implemented. Each campus has already adopted a more global goal (e.g., top ten urban university); progress on the selected recommendations should contribute to achieving the larger goal.

The campuses will be able to begin implementation of Vision 2010 using small start-up grants (\$10,000 per campus) provided by the President's Office.

The committee recommends that each campus report back to the Board of Regents annually on the demonstrable progress being made and any changes or modifications in action plans that are made as a result of the assessment process.

Appendix I

Culture of Excellence Committee Membership

Co-chairs: J. J. Cohen, School of Medicine, UCHSC
Steven Maier, Department of Psychology, UCB
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Jane Menken, Department of Sociology, UCB
Melissa Sampson, Graduate Student Representative, UCB
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John Sladek, VC Research, UCHSC
Ron Stump, VC Student Affairs, UCB
Rick Wilhelm, Undergraduate Representative, UCB
Mark Winey, Department of MCD Biology, UCB

Appendix II

The Norlin Charge

The first commencement at the University of Colorado was held for six graduates on June 8, 1882, in the chapel of Old Main. Since that first commencement, over 300,000 degrees have been awarded by the four campuses of University of Colorado. The traditional Norlin Charge to the graduates was read by the late President George Norlin to the June 1935 graduating class. It speaks eloquently of a culture of excellence.

You are now certified to the world at large as alumni of the University. She is your kindly mother and you her cherished sons and daughters. This exercise denotes not your severance from her, but your union with her. Commencement does not mean, as many wrongly think, the breaking of ties and the beginning of life apart. Rather, it marks your initiation in the fullest sense into the fellowship of the University, as bearers of her torch, as centers of her influence, as promoters of her spirit.

The University is not the campus, not the buildings on the campus, not the faculties, not the students of any one time - - not one of these or all of them. The University consists of all who come into and go forth from her halls, who are touched by her influence and who carry on her spirit. Wherever you go, the University goes with you. Wherever you are at work, there is the University at work.

What the University purposes to be, what it must always strive to be, is represented on its seal, which is stamped on your diplomas -- a lamp in the hands of youth. If its light shine not in you and from you, how great is its darkness! But if it shine in you today, and in the thousands before you, who can measure its power?

With hope and faith, I welcome you into the fellowship. I bid you farewell only in the sense that I pray you may fare well. You go forth, but not from us. We remain, but not severed from you. God go with you and be with you and us.