

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to community demand, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs was created in 1965, bringing to the Pikes Peak Region a campus presence of the University of Colorado. The campus operated primarily as a commuter campus until 1997 when on-campus housing was added, sparking the campus' transition to a modern metropolitan university that serves students from all 60 Colorado counties, 50 states and more than 35 countries. The campus now offers students a choice of 25 bachelor's, 18 master's and two doctoral degrees.



The designated growth campus for the University of Colorado System, UCCS serves more than 10,000 students annually through its combination of on-campus services and an active Division of Extended Studies. More than 80 percent are undergraduates and of those students, 37 percent are first-generation college students. For the past decade, UCCS has led Colorado as the fastest growing public university. The campus utilizes a selective admissions index and attracts a highly capable student body. In 2005, a record freshman class of 1,026, including 18 percent underrepresented students, enrolled.

In the past decade, enrollment of underrepresented students increased 68 percent. Students who self-declare as an ethnic minority make up 18 percent of the campus population. Six-year graduation rates of ethnic minority students are equal to the campus average, approximately 36 percent. In the past decade, bachelor's degrees awarded to students of color increased 63 percent and awards of advanced degrees increased by 152 percent.

The UCCS report to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity presents information about diversity and inclusion activities at the university and about UCCS involvement in the community. This report provides an overview of the institutional mission, demographic data about the institution and the southern Colorado region, the university's position on diversity and inclusion, information about activities undertaken by the university, and data about programs and their costs.

Purpose

CU President Hank Brown established the Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity to engage in a System-wide external review of diversity programs at the University of Colorado. The immediate outcome of this analysis will be a set of recommendations for improving diversity with a particular focus on student recruitment and the academic climate. The ultimate outcome will be important achievements in the recruitment and retention of students of color and other diverse students at CU, and in creating a welcoming and enriching academic environment.

Expected Outcomes

Input and Considerations for

- Improving the campus climate: making the campus more welcoming for all students; increasing safety for students; and creating a stronger sense of community for all university members.
- Strengthening pipelines to college for K-12 students: improving and expanding the university's successful pre-collegiate programs for greater outreach to middle and high school students.
- Improving recruitment and retention of underrepresented students: bolstering recruitment of students of color through creative, effective outreach activities and enhancing retention rates for students of color.
- Strengthening community and corporate partnerships with CU: involving local communities and businesses to a greater extent in supporting diversity efforts at the university through mentorship, internships, and other activities.
- Refining the campus strategic plan for diversity: honing the diversity plan to reflect campus-wide responsibility and accountability for advancing the university's diversity goals.

Defining Diversity

UCCS uses a framework for diversity that recognizes historically under-represented persons and groups in the areas of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, veteran, and ability status. This traditional definition is broadened through the recognition of nationality, religion, socioeconomic status and diverse experiences. This inclusive view is captured in the UCCS core values statement which was developed in 2004 as part of a campus strategic plan. A core UCCS value is to *“aggressively seek the development of a multicultural campus environment in which each person contributes unique talents to make the university a better place. In turn, each person will be fully valued and supported.”*

This report is divided into the following sections

- University History and Overview
- Southern Colorado Overview
- UCCS Profile
- Current Campus Climate
- Pipelines to College
- Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Students
- Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Faculty and Staff
- Community and Corporate Partnerships
- Budgets for Current Programs
- Campus Strategic Plan for Diversity
- UCCS Goals for Enrichment of Diversity
- Appendix

University and Southern Colorado Overview

UCCS is located in Colorado’s largest county, El Paso, an area that continues to undergo rapid change as a center for high-technology in addition to traditional bases in sports, leisure activities and the military. Colorado Springs is a hub for southern Colorado, a 22-county region that has traditionally supported the state’s agriculture and mining industries. Historically, southern Colorado has a relatively large ethnic minority population. Median income levels lag state averages as do high school graduation rates and college participation rates. While there is a relatively large number of academically talented underrepresented students in southern Colorado, low income levels and, in many cases, a lack of understanding about access to higher education hinder efforts to recruit and retain these students.

Current Campus Climate

Because of its rapid change to a modern, metropolitan university, its status as the designated CU growth campus, and its position as one the fastest growing universities in the nation, UCCS is well positioned to take advantage of best practices. Strategic planning undertaken during the past three years created an environment of collaboration among faculty, staff and community members and identified key priorities, including the creation of an inclusive campus environment.





In a 2005 survey of graduating UCCS seniors, 76 percent of students of color responded that the campus had provided “much” assistance in helping them achieve academically. Additionally, more than 47 percent of seniors of color responded that the campus had provided “much” assistance in dealing with non-academic obligations such as work or family responsibilities. These students also provided the university with high marks for the quality of education received at UCCS. Specific areas included citizenship, working with others, self-discipline, motivation and multicultural awareness. The ratings by students of color in these areas were slightly higher than ratings by White students.

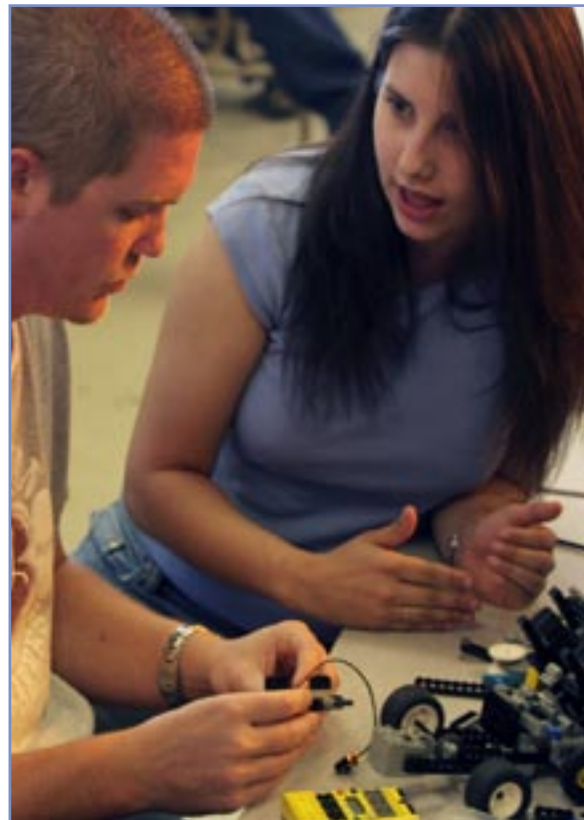
Pipelines to College

UCCS offers more than ten pipeline programs, including the highly regarded Pre-Collegiate Development Program, to students throughout the region. Many of the programs are local or regional chapters of national efforts, including Smart-Girl, a program designed to improve the self-esteem of young girls, Project Lead the Way, a national program designed to help high school teachers improve their abilities to teach science and math, and both math and science Olympiads. Others are locally based and include engineering competitions for area middle school students. The programs share in common a desire to bring young people, many of whom have the potential to be the first in their families to attend college, to campus to see first-hand the opportunities that await them.

Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Students

The university has a variety of student recruitment and retention programs in place as well as many supporting activities conducted university wide and within schools and colleges. Its challenge is to ensure coordination and to continually monitor the programs for effectiveness.

As a goal, UCCS aims to have its student body reflect the ethnic background of southern Colorado’s overall population. To achieve this goal, additional recruitment efforts target areas such as the San Luis Valley, an area with historically low college participation rates. By improving already strong ties with southern Colorado community colleges, UCCS aims to improve transfer rates from this region. UCCS also has a formalized program to recruit home-schooled students to the university.



Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Faculty and Staff

In 2005, UCCS created the Office of Academic Diversity, an office responsible for promoting the diversification of faculty and staff through recruitment and retention efforts. A faculty minority affairs committee assists with efforts to recruit and retain minority faculty members, and academic deans are charged with developing diversity strategies as new faculty are added as part of a campus Seven-Year Growth Plan. The seven-year plan was approved by the CU Board of Regents in June 2005. Approximately 14 percent of the 200 faculty tenured and tenure-track positions are held by ethnic minorities and 36 percent are held by women.

Community and Corporate Partnerships

UCCS is actively engaged with its community, earning recognition nationally among U.S. colleges and universities for its close work with both public and private sectors of the Colorado Spring community. Because of its relatively young alumni base, UCCS has turned to community support for a variety of programs, including the highly successful Reach Your Peak Scholarship Program and specific programs for nursing students supported by local hospitals.

Budgets for Current Programs

The UCCS current funds budget for FY 2006 is \$92.8 million. Of this amount \$15.6 million or 16.9 percent is from the state general fund. The campus is responsible for \$65.92 million in outstanding long term debt as of June 1, 2005. Extramural funding increased to \$8.7 million in 2005. Endowment funds generate approximately \$800,000 annually. Expenditures supporting diversity initiatives are \$2.47 million annually.

Campus Strategic Plan for Diversity

UCCS has an approved diversity plan. The plan will be updated and revised following the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission and input from campus and community constituents. As part of its Seven-Year Growth Plan, UCCS colleges have developed specific diversity plans as the university moves forward.

UCCS Goals for Enrichment of Diversity

The university seeks to have a student body that is representative of southern Colorado and to increase its representation of ethnic minority faculty and staff members. The university also seeks to improve its support systems for first-generation students, low-income students, and students with family demands, to increase international student enrollment, and to provide student support services differentiated by student needs.

Appendix

Biographies of students, faculty, staff and community members participating in the Blue Ribbon Panel are included, as is a timeline for a final report. Specific data about students, faculty, staff, admissions data, student financial aid, and the results of campus climate surveys are included.

