

## CRITERION THREE: STUDENT LEARNING AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING

*The organization provides evidence of student learning and teaching effectiveness that demonstrates it is fulfilling its educational mission.*

The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs' (UCCS's) commitment to student learning is clearly evident in both the articulated vision — *We will provide unexcelled, student-oriented teaching and learning* — and stated values of the campus:

### ***Student Success***

*We will help traditional and nontraditional students succeed in their academic endeavors by assuring a stimulating, supportive, safe, and naturally beautiful setting. Campus residence halls will enrich students' experiences by providing a living-learning environment. We will encourage students to recognize their responsibility to participate fully in their own educational success and to contribute to the quality of campus life.*

### ***Quality Teaching***

*We will demonstrate the highest regard for teaching excellence and will reward quality teaching. We will strive to maintain predominantly small classes taught by dedicated and accessible full-time faculty and other qualified professionals.*

### ***Research and Creative Work***

*We will promote and reward research and creative work that advances knowledge, makes a valuable contribution, enhances our teaching and service missions, and encourages collaboration between undergraduate or graduate students and faculty.*

UCCS brought the educational resources of the state's flagship higher educational institution to Colorado Springs. As such, it attracted some of the most student-centered faculty from the Boulder campus to its founding. That tradition of devotion to teaching and student learning is very much alive in today's faculty, over 86 percent of whom say classroom teaching is an important part of their professional identity. The institution consistently provides resources to support quality teaching and student learning, and it rewards faculty who are successful in teaching.

Part of the evidence of the value that UCCS places on student learning is its rigorous program review process, which in recent years has been complemented by progressively more effective and systematic formal assessments of student learning. Even though it is important to acknowledge a continuing need for progress in this arena, the fact that more than half the faculty agree with the statement, "I believe assessment activities are helping to improve student learning and the overall quality in my academic program," is heartening.

*Core Component 3b — The organization values and supports effective teaching.*

## Quality Faculty

Faculty are the core of UCCS' commitment to effective teaching. UCCS' professors and instructors are highly qualified, diverse, and engaged in a variety of traditional and nontraditional approaches to pedagogy. UCCS' faculty see themselves as teaching scholars whose task it is to present bodies of knowledge, expose students to multiple perspectives, inspire students to engage in sophisticated intellectual inquiry, and prepare students to become active, critical participants in their careers and communities. The campus culture is one that values the interaction of students and faculty both inside and outside classrooms and laboratories. In this respect, the university resembles smaller liberal arts, engineering, and business colleges more than it resembles large, research-centered university campuses.

UCCS has a fully qualified, active faculty, engaged in teaching, research, and service. All 207 tenured and tenure-track faculty members hold doctoral degrees or, in one case, the terminal master level degree appropriate to the field. Of the 327 non-tenured and part-time faculty members, 97 hold doctoral degrees, and 197 hold master's degrees. Campus policies and procedures formally recognize the central role of teaching in faculty workloads, annual evaluations, and promotion. The standard workload weighting for tenure-track faculty is 40 percent teaching, 40 percent research and scholarly work, and 20 percent service. When circumstances warrant, faculty can negotiate with deans for differentiated workloads, including a workload that increases the weight given to teaching.

In annual merit reviews, each tenure-track faculty member receives an assessment of teaching performance that accounts for 40 percent of his or her evaluation. Evaluation of teaching is also an essential component of promotion and tenure decisions. By the Laws of the Regents, every tenure-track faculty member must demonstrate meritorious or excellent teaching to qualify for tenure. In the past decade, the campus has made such evaluation more explicit by requiring each academic department to develop a set of formal standards for promotion and tenure that includes specific expectations for teaching

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and multiple measures to be used in evaluation. These department standards have been reviewed at the college and campus levels, and have been formally approved by the VCAA.

Instructors, who are at will employees, also undergo evaluations every year. In most cases, 100 percent of instructors' workloads are devoted to teaching, and annual merit raises for instructors are tied to their performance.

Faculty have primary responsibility for the campus curriculum. Each college has a curriculum committee that reviews new course proposals, changes in existing courses, proposed discontinuance of courses, and changes in department-level requirements for graduation. These committees also are responsible for maintaining the integrity of the general education curriculum.

Faculty's attitude toward teaching is an important element of UCCS' success. Although attitude is hard to quantify, responses on the Faculty Questionnaire, given during the fall of 2005 in anticipation of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) self-study, provide perspectives. For example, a full 86 percent agreed that "teaching in a classroom setting is an essential part of who I am professionally." Yet, 53 percent of surveyed faculty agreed with this statement: "The rewards for effective teaching are insufficient on this campus." Only 15 percent agreed with this statement: "The merit evaluation process for teaching results in adequate rewards for effective teaching." These responses may reflect a general dissatisfaction with rewards rather than dissatisfaction with the evaluation process. Clearly, faculty value their roles as teachers, but do not believe that the formal evaluation process rewards their roles enough. Corroboration for the fact that faculty believe teaching is important at UCCS even if the rewards may not fully reflect that importance can be found in the 2001 UCLA HERI survey, which compares faculty attitudes toward teaching to those of their counterparts at other institutions. Nearly half of the UCCS faculty indicated that the institutional emphasis on teaching is very important while less than a third of their counterparts agreed ([UCCS Office of Institutional Research, Research Brief #2](#)).

Faculty employ an array of teaching philosophies and methods. Increasingly, faculty deliver some course material and instruction online — sometimes the course material and instruction are offered online as full courses, but more often than not they are offered in hybrid formats that combine classroom teaching philosophies and methods with online segments. Faculty value one-on-one interaction. This is most apparent in student research. Undergraduates are often included in faculty field and laboratory research, and faculty even include undergraduates as junior authors on the publication of research results. Faculty also encourage and assist undergraduates in independent research projects. As detailed elsewhere in this report, since 2004, undergraduates have participated in the Colorado Springs Undergraduate Research Forum (SCURF) that includes students from UCCS, Colorado College (CC), and the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA).

Students at UCCS value and appreciate faculty's commitment to teaching. A campus summary of Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs) for calendar year 2005 yielded a combined score of 3.24 (out of a possible 4) on the question, "How do you rate this course?" Based on 2,880 total instructional sections, the summary yielded a 3.41 for all faculty on the question, "How do you rate your instructor compared to all your other university instructors?"

Of more interest, perhaps, are the results of the Student Questionnaire given in fall 2005. Eighty-three percent of students responded very well or sufficiently well in response to this query: "How well do you think your college's general education program addresses furthering the intellectual development of individual students?" Of the entire survey, this question received the highest percentage of positive responses from its 1,100 respondents. And this question was directed at general education courses, not students' major coursework. Responses to two other questions are also telling: 66 percent of students agreed that "faculty at UCCS do a good job of getting students involved in research, scholarly, and creative activities," and 80 percent agreed that "technology on the UCCS campus is sufficiently available to meet the learning needs of students." These responses attest to the dynamic interaction between faculty and students and the commitment the campus has made to the technological support of teaching.

## **Merit Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure**

University of Colorado (CU) Rules of the Regents, 5.B.6, require annual merit performance evaluations for all faculty members. Each academic unit has developed performance standards and criteria that have been approved by the VCAA (evidence: VCAA notebooks of unit criteria). The CU System Administrative Policy Statement on Annual Merit Adjustments for Faculty specifies that, except for

faculty who have differentiated work loads, equal consideration must be given to teaching along with research.

As stated in the Administrative Policy Statement on Multiple Means of Teaching Evaluation, assessment of teaching must involve multiple sources of evidence, including the system-wide Faculty Course Questionnaire (FCQ) or an alternative measure developed by the campus. In addition, faculty must provide evidence of their teaching effectiveness from at least two other sources from the list below:

- Other student feedback
- Student advising and mentoring
- Peer evaluations
- Teaching portfolios
- Course syllabi and examples of assignments and exams
- Scholarly research and publications on teaching
- Long-term follow-up of students
- Efforts to keep up-to-date course materials and methods, including the integration of technology into courses

Despite the requirement to use a variety of sources when providing evidence for teaching effectiveness, many faculty believe that there is still a sole reliance on FCQ ratings because, in part, they result in quantitative scores that can be compared with those of faculty in other departments and colleges. The current effort is to change both that perception and practice. A system-wide committee, Learning, Educational Technology, Teaching, and Scholarship (LETTS), has developed two reports — one on improving FCQ practices and one on the use of peer assessments and teaching portfolios.

Most units provide a faculty mentor to help candidates who are up for review develop their dossiers. Units also must provide candidates with the unit, campus, and system-wide criteria and review policies.

## Campus and Unit Teaching Awards

The following core value for UCCS stresses the importance the university places on quality teaching: *We will demonstrate the highest regard for teaching excellence and will reward quality teaching. We will strive to maintain predominantly small classes taught by dedicated and accessible full-time faculty and other qualified professionals.* The campus demonstrates its regard for teaching by providing campus and unit level awards.

### Campus Outstanding Teacher Award

Each year, the Outstanding Teacher Award is presented to a faculty member judged to be “outstanding in classroom presentations as well as having a thorough knowledge of his or her subject area.” Candidates must be full-time faculty members, have the rank of assistant professor or above, be in at least their third year of teaching at UCCS, and have not previously received this award.

The University Club, whose purpose is to foster mutual understanding and support between the university and business and professional communities in the Pikes Peak region, provides a \$3,000 cash award and \$1,000 scholarship, established in the winner's name.

### **Campus Outstanding Instructor Award**

The Outstanding Instructor Award is given each year to either a full-time or part-time instructor. Candidates must be outstanding in classroom presentations and also have a thorough knowledge of their subject matter. Specific requirements are that candidates have taught at least five semesters at UCCS and have not previously received this award. The winner of the Outstanding Instructor Award receives \$1,000 cash. Funding for the Outstanding Instructor Award is provided by the VCAA.

### **Innovations in Teaching with Technology Award**

The Innovations in Teaching with Technology Award is given to a faculty member or department for innovative uses of technology in teaching and learning. Candidates are judged on their:

- Integration of pedagogy and technology
- Novel use or adaptation of contemporary technologies
- Positive impact on student learning
- Creative contribution to one's academic discipline
- Contribution to the campus' academic unit and overall campus goals to enhance teaching and learning with technology

The winner of the Innovations in Teaching with Technology Award receives \$1,000 cash and \$1,000 for equipment and software expenditures. Funding is provided by the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC).

### **Unit Teaching Awards**

All colleges give annual teaching awards. The College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences grants an Outstanding Teacher Award, an Outstanding Instructor Award, and an Outstanding Part-Time Instructor/Lecturer Award; the College of Business and Administration (COB) and College of Education (COE) each offer an Outstanding Teaching Award; EAS presents both an Outstanding Teacher Award and Outstanding Part-time Instructor Award; Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences (Beth-El) confers an Outstanding Faculty Award and Instructor Award; the Graduate School of Public Affairs (GSPA) bestows a joint (CU Denver and UCCS) faculty Excellence in Teaching Award.

### **President's Teaching Scholar Award**

The highest honor for teaching is the system-wide President's Teaching Scholar Award. Teaching scholars excel in teaching, scholarship, and research. They are chosen not only for demonstrating skill in their own classrooms but also for their promise of improving education and enlarging its possibilities across the university. The president's teaching scholars form a learning community and serve as ambassadors for teaching and research. They work on individual, departmental, and campus-wide projects aimed at cultivating effective teaching, engaged learning, and the integration of research in teaching. Those appointed as teaching scholars receive a \$3,000 stipend

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*UCCS has eight  
President's  
Teaching Scholars*

for each of the first two years, a one-time teaching development fund of \$2,000, and an additional \$2,000 to their base salary beginning the third year. UCCS has eight president's teaching scholars, who have been actively involved with fostering a climate of teaching excellence on campus.

## The Teaching and Learning Center

Founded as the Teaching Technology Center in 1998, the [Teaching and Learning Center](#) (TLC) has provided faculty and campus offices with considerable assistance in the form of technical and monetary support for the development of learning outcomes assessment. The center has provided, without charge, the following services: video and audio production assistance and design, which highlight exemplary teaching on campus; consultations with outside specialty contractors for assessment projects; design consultations with faculty for online modules and course delivery; website design and graphics production; consultation for pre-and post-tests, surveys, and refresher tutorials; diagnostic exams and course-level assessment tools; online training modules; and movies for online courses and new student orientation.

The TLC has been at the forefront of increasing the visibility of teaching on campus with its open classroom series, luncheons in honor of Best Practices, Faculty Partnership Program, and Teaching with Technology award winners. TLC's website provides information regarding excellence in teaching and learning, and faculty interviews on teaching and learning are heard in the center's weekly campus radio program in an effort to highlight and celebrate individuals and initiatives. In collaboration with other campus units, the TLC has sponsored and funded campus forums on instructional technology, campus culture, academic honesty, and information literacy. The attendance at forums has exceeded 460 faculty, staff, and students. Through walk-in services and workshops, the number of faculty and staff served from 2001 – 2005 has exceeded 3,000 visits with an average of over 450 logged visits per year. For tenure-track faculty, the TLC has workshops on teaching portfolios, teaching with technology, and best pedagogical practices. The center has provided special programming for new and non-tenure-track faculty such as orientations, small workshops, group training, and extended hours for walk-in assistance.

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*The Teaching and Learning Center mission has expanded to include a broader concern for pedagogical innovation.*

The Faculty Partnership program has funded innovation in all aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment. The program was intended to foster collaboration between two or more faculty members to develop a more innovative and effective approach for a specific course. The TLC was especially interested in helping faculty adapt courses from traditional delivery environments to an online environment and improving student learning outcomes. Unfortunately, the funding for this grant was suspended in 2005 due to budget constraints. The center also offered smaller faculty grants for Best Practices Awards in Teaching and Learning and course-level assessments.

While the original mission of the center focused on programming aimed at technology adoption and excellence, its mission has expanded to include a broader outreach for pedagogical innovation, specifically learner-centered classrooms, active learning, cross-

disciplinary collaboration, and more opportunities for internships and experiential learning. The center actively encourages faculty to participate in the annual CU Teaching with Technology Conference with incentives and technical support. As a result, the use of online resources has increased, as has the

number of enrollments in eCollege (completely online) and eCompanion (hybrid) course shells. Over a two-year period, LAS saw an increase of nearly 1,000 percent in the use eCompanion.

The TLC director participates in system-wide committees to share ideas about innovation in teaching with peers on other campuses. These contacts include the Committee for the Advancement of Learning Innovations; the Learning, Educational Technology, Teaching, and Scholarship (LETTS) Committee; and the President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative.

The new goals of the TLC respond to the needs of the campus in terms of 1) promoting teaching and learning, 2) achieving excellence through faculty and staff development, 3) assessing student learning achievements, and 4) encouraging the scholarship of teaching. While the first two goals have always been the foundation of the TLC, the third and fourth goals of assessment and scholarship are recent and timely. These two goals will help encourage faculty to assess the learning that they promote and initiate research projects in the context of teaching. These areas contribute directly to the mission of the campus for excellence in teaching and learning and in scholarship.

The center recognizes the goals of general education to prepare graduates to think, read, write, and speak critically, analytically, and creatively, and to participate in their responsibilities as citizens. In November 2006, the center plans to sponsor and organize a "Learning Week" to showcase learning on campus.

Regarding faculty development, the TLC is requesting funding for an Instructional Technologist position to facilitate the continued adoption of teaching with technology. In fall 2006, the center plans to establish face-to-face and online communities to allow for asynchronous discussion and file-sharing among faculty interested in similar instructional issues such as group work and problem-based learning, engagement in large lecture classes, and diversity, civility, and academic honesty in the classroom. The center is also committed to help fund national speakers on new technologies and active, experiential, and integrative learning. The TLC will continue to provide one-on-one assistance to faculty with course-level assessment of student learning and guidance to academic units on revising their assessment plans to connect courses to their stated goals more effectively.

Finally, numerous ways in which the center can jump-start the scholarship of teaching and learning are available. For instance, the TLC plans to establish a program of faculty mentoring. The center also plans to collaborate with the Faculty Assembly Teaching Excellence Council to begin a conversation about how publications related to teaching are weighted across the campus in the promotion and tenure dossier.

## Other Campus and College Supports for Teaching

The campus supports teaching in several other ways, such as the \$500 annual Teaching Enhancement Grants provided by the VCAA. Other efforts include the work of the Faculty Assembly's Council on Teaching Excellence (CTE) to promote a culture of learning and teaching excellence. In AY 2005 – 06, the council sponsored a Master Teachers in Action series in which teaching award winners opened their classrooms to students, faculty, and staff to observe the master teachers in action. Following class sessions, council members facilitate discussions on the observations.

CTE is also developing a mentoring program. In October 2005, a team of faculty attended the AASCU conference on integrative learning, and in conjunction with CTE, the team is developing a set of initiatives to inform faculty about integrative learning and sponsor pilot projects for faculty teams.

*The President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative supports a series of projects that emphasize student learning on each campus.*

Another effort grew out of a visit by a group of President's Teaching Scholars to the Carnegie Foundation for Teaching and Learning, where they sought a process and model for the scholarship of teaching and learning. This resulted in the President's Teaching and Learning Collaborative (PTLC), which supports a series of pilot projects that emphasize student learning on each campus. Participating faculty will carry out a program of inquiry on teaching and learning that is planned to produce publishable results. They will team with other faculty, helping coach participants to refine their research question, select appropriate methods, and prepare results for publication.

Within campus units, several CTE members have established mentoring programs for tenure-track faculty, and many hold workshops on teaching methods. Beth-El has a technology coordinator who assists faculty with technology needs and provides enhancement grants of \$100 to support teaching or research. Most colleges provide support for interdisciplinary teaching through participation in the Freshman Seminar. In LAS, faculty may also participate in the Core Humanities program.

*Core Component 3a. The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.*

## Academic Program Review Process

The [Laws of the Regents](#) of CU stipulate that an academic review of all units will be conducted once every five to seven years to identify strengths and weaknesses, make recommendations for program development, and promote high quality and well-administered academic programs. External accreditation reviews, where applicable, substitute for the internal program review. All academic programs and units, including the library, that do not undergo accreditation reviews are reviewed every seven years as part of this comprehensive program review process.

The Academic Program Review Panel (APRP), a campuswide faculty committee appointed by the VCAA, schedules and conducts [program reviews](#), sets guidelines for the unit's self-study, participates in the reviews, and summarizes and comments on review team reports. Furthermore, according to the recently revised policy, a member of the panel serves with two external reviewers, including at least one from a Colorado institution. Each unit undergoing review prepares a self-study according to established guidelines. The self-study is reviewed by the dean and APRP and is revised as necessary before being sent to the review team.

Each review includes a two- to three-day on-site visit by the three-person review team, who submit a written report summarizing their findings and recommending appropriate actions to APRP. The unit and dean prepare written responses to the review team's report, indicating how issues in the review report will be addressed. At the end of the academic year, APRP works with the VCAA to prepare an



annual report of program review activities for the year. This report is submitted to the CU vice president for academic affairs and includes information on the current year's reviews as well as updates on all programs reviewed by the campus in the prior three years.

Student learning outcomes, teaching effectiveness, and curricular offerings all are evaluated as part of the program review process. Multicultural emphases in the curriculum and placement of the unit's graduates also are integral elements of the review process. Each unit's self-study includes a section on teaching that focuses on curriculum development, the relationship of the curriculum to overall unit objectives, student advising procedures, and the placement of unit graduates. The self-study addresses multicultural emphases in the curriculum in a separate diversity section. The unit's written goals and objectives are included and explained in relation to the campus and school/college goals. Each self-study also includes a section on student outcomes assessment, describing the unit's current assessment techniques and procedures, faculty involvement in the assessment process, and any unit changes that have occurred as a result of assessment activities.

Each program review includes a comprehensive appraisal of the unit and its work based on the unit's self-study, additional campus information sent to reviewers, and the on-site visit. Among their charges, review teams focus on student learning outcomes and assessment, suggesting ways to involve faculty more fully in defining student learning and determining whether intended learning outcomes have been achieved. The following section documents specific changes and program improvements that have been made as a result of the program review process.

Academic program review is an integral part of the program improvement process. It provides the reviewed units with the opportunity to (1) examine their current goals and objectives in relation to broader campus goals, (2) check the currency and relevance of their curriculum, (3) address issues related to student learning outcomes and assessment, and (4) develop a plan for program development and improvement. Over the past few years, revisions to both the policy and procedures for program review have made the process more viable and comparable to accreditation processes. The departments, campus, and CU System all use the academic program review as a guide in making curricular, planning, and faculty staffing decisions.

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*Revisions to academic program review have made the process more viable.*

In addition, review recommendations offer support and justification for requests of additional resources. Because of numerous campus resource challenges over the past several years, review teams have been asked to focus specifically on possible improvements to units or programs that do not require extensive additional resources. As a result, numerous review recommendations have been implemented without substantial increases in resources.

Based on recommendations in past program reviews, departments have designed new assessment tools to measure student learning outcomes, revise curricula, examine department goals, argue for new tenure-track faculty positions, and redefine their educational outcomes more effectively. The impact of program reviews during the past three years is illustrated in the following:

The **English Department** integrated questions about writing in the senior exit survey for English majors, added an instructional survey to English 131 (Rhetoric and Writing I), planned changes in the curriculum based on survey input, and held workshops with Professional Writing Program faculty that focused on assessment of end-of-semester papers in Professional Writing courses.

The **Political Science Department** increased its offerings in comparative and international politics and converted its senior thesis course to an honors thesis.

The **Psychology Department** successfully launched its Gerontology PhD program, redesigned its honors program, restructured the curriculum, and expanded advising activities. The department also increased its support for graduate students at all levels through orientation programs, email lists, and resource books with policy and professional information.

The **Communication Department** added a tenure-track faculty line and completed a revision of its media curriculum.

The **Freshman Seminar** program expanded its extensive assessment activities to include assessment of the program's impact on junior teaching assistants (JTAs), enlarged the program to include 40 faculty and staff from 25 units as instructors, and revised course objectives.

The **Economics Department** altered its offerings of introductory courses to free up resources for a wider variety of upper-division courses, formalized the advising strategy of the department, and increased outreach efforts and certificate programs through the Center for Economic Education.

The **Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences** added a tenure-track faculty position in climatology, strengthened the environmental component by adding courses in sustainability, increased the number and variety of field component offerings in undergraduate classes, and broadened the curricular options for graduate students.

The **Master of Basic Science program** changed its name recently to master of sciences, expanded its degree options to include biochemistry/biotechnology and forensic science, dropped anthropology, and distributed the administration of each option to the department that supports that option.

## Program-Level Assessment of Student Learning

The university continually strives to improve its service to diverse learners, multiple constituents, and society at large. To that end, the ongoing collection, reporting, and use of evidence to improve student learning are central to the institution's evaluation of its success in meeting its educational mission. The process begins at the program and department levels, where faculty come together to discuss findings as part of their unit's planning efforts; campus planning emerges from the subsequent units' plans.

### Student Achievement Assessment Committee

The conceptual framework for and guidance on implementation for the assessment of student learning and teaching effectiveness at the program level is provided by the [Student Achievement Assessment Committee](#) (SAAC). Its mission states:

*The Student Achievement Assessment Committee, composed of faculty, staff, and student members, oversees the implementation and advancement of assessment of student achievement and student learning at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.*

Faculty members appointed to SAAC typically have a scholarly background in assessment or have direct experience in assessing academic programs. The charge given to SAAC is to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the benefits and practice of effective assessment of

student achievement within undergraduate and graduate academic programs, distance-learning programs, and the general education program

- Ensure that students, faculty, and staff view assessment as part of the institution's culture and as a resource for improving instruction and student learning
- Assist the university in improving institutional effectiveness and fulfilling its mission and vision, particularly those elements directly focused on assessment and improving student learning
- Promote students' knowledge about the institution's assessment program through explicit public statements regarding the institution's expectations for student learning and the student's role and responsibility in that effort
- Assist faculty in the assessment of student learning, specifically, the seven principles that promote student learning — teacher-student interaction, collaborative learning, active learning, prompt feedback, time on task, high expectations, and respect for diversity
- Provide assistance to units in regard to planning, implementing, and utilizing effective assessment plans and monitor the success of these plans
- Work with the Office of Institutional Research (IR) to oversee assessment of the core goals for general education. Based upon assessment findings, make recommendations to the VCAA and colleges for improvements on and use of results
- Oversee the administration of student assessment questionnaires for first-year students, graduating seniors, and baccalaureate and graduate alumni
- Administer the Academic Profile and National Survey of Student Engagement and disseminate the results to the campus community
- Distribute mini-grants to faculty for assessment research projects on student learning and achievement, and implement a Request for Proposals submission and selection process to assess proposals based on specific evaluative criteria
- Promote campus-wide integrated assessments such as studies done at the course, unit, department, and institution levels, aligned to achieve improvement in programs and increase student learning
- Help integrate assessment strategies among various departments that help guide institutional decisions and operational processes — planning, budget, improvements in instruction, staffing, curriculum, student services, and academic services
- Communicate information about assessment activities and outcomes to the campus community
- Advise the VCAA on policies and practices affecting assessment

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*Faculty members of SAAC typically have a scholarly background or direct experience in assessment.*

The faculty governance and administrative structures of the university authorize this committee and its work. SAAC reports to EPUS of the Faculty Assembly and advises the VCAA on matters related to its charge.

The program assessment plans and results are submitted as reports and are reviewed annually by SAAC members outside the unit. Those conducting the reviews are primarily faculty who understand best practices in assessment methods and who are familiar with HLC's assessment and accreditation criteria. Peer reviewers provide faculty in each unit a rating of their assessment activities. Recognition is given for unit activities that are working to improve curricula and teaching. Constructive and collegial feedback is offered on those activities that can be modified to improve learning and teaching. Compilation of the peer reviews is then used at the campus level to gauge the institution's effectiveness in learning and teaching. The annual cycle allows the campus to stay abreast of the results of assessment conducted at the unit level and of the numerous improvements to teaching styles, learning methods, and curricula made each year. Some improvements represent sweeping changes while other improvements are subtle. In either case, UCCS improves its overall level of student learning and teaching effectiveness each year through the work of the SAAC.

### *Annual Assessment Cycle*

The student achievement assessment process enables the campus to measure the contribution of the UCCS experience to student learning. The process is built on a three-domain conceptual framework: cognitive learning or knowledge acquisition, behavioral learning or skill acquisition, and affective learning or attitudinal development.

During the first few years of SAAC, an evaluative process was used to understand more completely the range of assessment that was already taking place at UCCS. Campus goals for general education, the graduate curriculum, and each degree program and stand-alone minor were examined at this time. SAAC reviewed the (1) student learning objectives, assessment processes, and instruments and techniques, (2) description of results generated by the assessment process, (3) interpretation of assessment results, and (4) overall strengths and weaknesses of the assessment plans submitted by each academic unit.

Prior to 2001, yearly assessment progress reports lacked consistency in content and context. So, an electronic progress report form was created to assist academic units in preparing their annual report.

### *An electronic progress report form assists units in preparing annual reports.*

Similarly, in order to apply consistent standards, SAAC members created evaluation forms to review the submitted annual reports. The electronic form provides units with previously reported assessment information that makes completing updates less arduous. The form also provides the campus with the means of creating an assessment database to measure campus-wide student learning and teaching effectiveness.

As a result of having numerous inter-rater reliability sessions and formal workshops and gathering informal feedback from faculty who complete the annual assessment report, the electronic form and assessment database evolved into an efficient means of collecting information from units, conducting report evaluations, and disseminating results to stakeholders. Through these means, the educational objectives for each program are updated annually in time for publication on pages 26 – 31 in the [Course Bulletin](#). The use of electronic forms also expedites the dissemination of program improvements provided in the [SAAC Annual Reports](#). The annual assessment progress reports have been useful in demonstrating the institutional commitment to consistent and systematic assessment of student learning during program accreditation visits by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and

Technology, Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Before 2005, SAAC evaluated each assessment progress report and designated it as fitting into one of four competency categories: follow-up, beginning, in-process, and acceptable. These categories were established to reflect the Higher Learning Commission's (HLC's) [Levels of Implementation and Patterns of Characteristics Analysis Worksheet](#). Ultimately, based on the unit's response, all of these were assigned to one of the categories. Follow-up reports were returned with comments for immediate revision. Beginning referred to units that were too early in their stage of assessment development to have a fully implemented assessment plan in place. In-process referred to units in the midst of implementing their assessment plan. For example, the unit may be in the process of implementing an assessment measure or waiting to collect or analyze data. Finally, acceptable referred to units with a functioning and effective assessment plan in place.

Based on feedback from the academic units and on the [Student Learning Principles](#) (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions), the assessment progress SAAC evaluation forms have been refined each year. The most recent Assessment Progress Report cycle (2005) began with a subgroup of SAAC members revising the [assessment progress report form](#) and the [progress report evaluation form](#). Current forms focus on the links between learning outcomes and curricula, involvement of stakeholders such as alumni and employers in compiling evidence, degree to which faculty within a unit are responsible for conducting assessment, and extent to which the unit disseminates assessment results to constituents. To assist units in planning assessment strategies and completing the progress report form, the campus learning outcomes coordinator created an [online guide](#).

Each fall semester, faculty responsible for degree programs and stand-alone minors are required to submit an annual progress report of assessment activities from the prior academic year. Typically, the department chair, head of the program's curriculum committee, or the department assessment coordinator completes the assessment progress report. Units have approximately four weeks to submit the report to the campus learning outcomes coordinator. The coordinator reviews each report to ensure that related attachments are received and that the report is complete. Completed reports, attachments, and SAAC comments from the previous year are sent to a minimum of two SAAC members for evaluation.

The progress report evaluation form is separated into nine sections, with each section detailing one component in the assessment cycle. For example, section one requires each unit to list its academic objectives for students graduating from their program, and section two requires a detailed list of assessment instruments used and their relationship to each academic objectives. Section nine asks the unit to describe the role of external constituents in the assessment process. Each section is evaluated quantitatively and qualitatively. Then, the SAAC reviewer makes an overall judgment on a scale of 1 to 9 as to where the progress report falls within the continuum:

- Beginning Implementation (1 to 3.4)
- Making Progress, lower and upper tiers (3.5 to 6.5)
- Continuous Improvement (6.6 to 9)

These designations mirror those used earlier — beginning, in-process, and acceptable — but reflect refinement of the institution's expectations for assessment. The following are characteristic of the assessment progress within each designation:

*Beginning Implementation*

Most descriptions of assessment plan activities do not meet expectations yet. However, their plans are in-process, or the details in the report provide information that will lead to the meeting of expectations.

Areas typically in need of work:

- Few measurable objectives, often not aligned to measures
- Multiple measures not in use
- No results submitted or analyzed
- No changes implemented
- Many descriptions unclear or incomplete

*Making Progress — Lower Tier*

Most descriptions of assessment plan activities meet expectations; four or more do not meet expectations:

- Some well defined, measurable objectives are identified
- Some have multiple measures in place
- The assessment plan is slowly being implemented
- Some data are being collected, or plans are in place for the collection of data
- Many areas are in the process of development

Areas typically in need of work:

- Objectives are often not aligned with assessment measures
- More detail is needed in the assessment plan
- Rubrics need to be created and submitted
- Assessment measures often rely solely on direct or indirect measures at the senior or graduating senior level
- Little data collected; if collected, not analyzed
- Little or no course-level assessment

*Making Progress — Upper Tier*

Most descriptions of assessment plan activities meet expectations; several exceed expectations:

- Objectives are clearly identified and measurable
- Multiple measures are identified
- Detailed descriptions of future plans are given
- Assessments are shared with faculty
- Unit presents and responds to data and unit plan improvements

Areas typically in need of work:

- Objectives are broad and difficult to measure
- Connection between objectives and measurement tools are vague
- Minimal data gathering and interpretation of those data takes place
- Heavy reliance on either direct or indirect measures happens primarily at the senior or graduating senior level
- Actual assessment measures such as rubrics and surveys are not included
- More course-level assessments are needed

### *Continuous Improvement*

Most assessment plan activities exceed expectations:

- Objectives are clear and measurable
- Assessment instruments measure the intended objectives
- Multiple measures — direct and indirect — are used
- Faculty are clearly involved in the assessment process
- Results are shared extensively
- Detailed quantitative and qualitative results are reported
- Results of assessment data are used for improvement
- Alumni, employers, and/or other external constituents are involved in the assessment

Most recently, and again in response to requests from the programs, SAAC has developed other methods of feedback that identify the specifics of an individual program's report and that concentrate on assessment essentials. The essential elements of assessment are defined as (1) a clear statement of the student learning objectives to be achieved by the program, (2) direct and indirect measures of the achievement of those outcomes, (3) collection and analysis of the data arising from those measures, and (4) use of the results to improve the program. Programs deemed not to have met expectations in any one of these areas are given specific, prioritized guidance on how they might meet these baseline expectations.

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*Most recently,  
feedback to units  
has concentrated  
on assessment  
essentials.*

A summary of the SAAC evaluations that includes overall unit best practices and ratings is submitted to administrators, deans, chairs, and other faculty. The [summary](#) is also posted on the Web to disseminate units' assessment program ratings to UCCS students, alumni, employers, and other constituencies. SAAC's comments are returned to each degree program and stand-alone minor for consideration in improving the unit's assessment plan and activities for the following year.

## **Implementing Best Practices of Assessment**

To guide program-level assessment, UCCS utilizes the [Nine Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning](#) as outlined by the American Association of Higher Education and the [Principles for](#)

*Good Practices* as outlined by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commission. Assessment activities based at the program and institutional levels are tied to carrying out these sets of principles.

In 2006, assessment progress reports were submitted for 100 percent of all degree programs and stand-alone minors. Of the reports submitted, 15 percent were evaluated at the continuous improvement level, having fully demonstrated that best practices were in place in their assessment efforts. Another 54 percent were evaluated at the making progress level, showing some presence of best practices in their assessment plans and results.

The comments provided annually by SAAC help position academic units — even those that are highly evaluated — to collect evidence of learning even more effectively and make further improvements based upon that evidence. A full-time campus learning outcomes coordinator and a staffed TLC operate to promote faculty development in conducting assessment by offering workshops on best practices for faculty and consulting with individual academic units seeking assistance in conducting assessments of student learning. Campus administration has also made investments to promote best practices in the form of purchasing standardized tests and awarding mini grants to faculty pursuing innovative assessment strategies.

Program assessment of student learning is central not only to academic units but also to student support units. Student support programs such as Residence Life, the Student Success Center (SSC) (advising), and the Excel Learning Centers (tutoring) assess their contributions to student learning. The Kraemer Family Library is also involved in the assessment of information literacy.

In support of institutional and program-level assessment, IR carries out annual surveys of entering first-year students, graduating seniors, and baccalaureate and graduate alumni. IR also examines the (1) relationship of math placement to achievement in initial math courses, (2) relationship between student attrition behaviors and achievement in first-year courses, (3) mix of faculty teaching first-year courses, and (4) relationship between patterns of awarding institutional scholarship aid and student retention. In addition, IR administers the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), analyzes the results within the context of the UCCS learning environment, and disseminates these [results](#) to the campus community and its constituents.

UCCS thus ensures that its standards of academic performance are being met by documenting student learning through the annual assessment cycle. The assessment progress form submitted by each unit must provide program learning goals. SAAC evaluates the goals for clarity and comprehensiveness in addressing both content and level of attainment. SAAC evaluators also examine whether:

- Assessment methods and tools are appropriate
- Evidence collected from these methods and tools can be directly linked to learning goals
- Collective judgment of the meaning, value, and utility of the evidence is being applied
- Improvements have been made based upon this evidence

Evaluators' comments provide constructive feedback to units, confirming instances where best practices are strong and suggesting refinements where best practices need improvement. Even the highest rated programs receive constructive comments from SAAC on ways to strengthen best practices still further.

Assessment of student learning is decentralized to the extent possible at UCCS. Those having a direct impact on student learning are the ones who carry out assessment. For this purpose, faculty are responsible for undertaking assessment of their academic programs, and staff are responsible for undertaking



assessment of their student enrichment programs. Mechanisms are in place whereby those conducting assessment provide the results of those efforts to central administration for further use in institutional planning and setting strategic directions.

Central administration further encourages that those working most directly in the learning environment be collaboratively involved in the collection, interpretation, and use of the evidence compiled. These expectations concerning learning assessment and the concomitant [responsibilities](#) of faculty, students, SAAC, deans, and the VCAA are outlined on the UCCS assessment website. As of 2006, 85 percent of academic units discuss the assessment data among their faculty and collaborate on improvements to be made based upon the salient findings. As of 2006, 69 percent of academic units involve students, alumni, employers, and other constituents in their assessment activities. All but one academic unit included at least one direct measure in their 2006 assessment plans. Results of the annual assessment reports are widely distributed across the campus community and beyond.

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*All but one 2006 plan included at least one direct measure of student learning.*

The broad participation at UCCS in collecting, interpreting, and using assessment evidence serves as a means of reinforcing and building upon the university's commitment to educational quality and improvement on a continuous basis.

### **Progress in Achieving Effective Program-Level Assessment**

In 1997, HLC's evaluation team noted that "UCCS is behind most NCA institutions in assessing student learning" and found that "assessment is spotty at the undergraduate and graduate levels." The report recommended a focused visit in five years with an expectation that the visiting team would find "a functioning assessment program that has produced demonstrable improvements in instructional programs."

In 2002, the focused visit team stated that UCCS had "made several noteworthy advances toward addressing their previously mentioned deficiencies in the area of student assessment." The team's report went on to suggest that "more resources need to be available for current assessment initiatives" and encouraged more rewards to support faculty assessment efforts.

Since 2002, the campus has made significant advances in this arena. Assessment results are integrated into institutional planning and are used to measure institutional effectiveness. The growing cadre of current and former SAAC members has continued to work with their colleagues on stressing the importance of conducting good assessment and applauding the numerous successes across the campus. SAAC was able to award mini grants for innovation assessment projects for two years, and the committee is hopeful that new awards may be authorized for next year. Where possible, UCCS administration has stepped forward to defray some costs for units wishing to use the Educational Testing Service's (ETS's) Major Field Tests. TLC and IR work together to advance faculty development opportunities in assessment through workshops and special events. Outside funding has also been tapped to support assessment projects. In one example, the electrical and computing engineering grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) allowed David Kolb's model of learning cycles to be applied to EAS undergraduate programs.

Self-study survey results from students show relatively high levels of awareness of learning assessment activities. The vast majority of student respondents, 82 percent, said that they understand the importance of assessing student learning and academic programs. A sizable majority of student

respondents, 62 percent, echoed a similar level of awareness of assessment at UCCS by agreeing that assessment activities help improve student learning and the overall quality of their academic programs. A significant proportion of student responses, 44 percent, further indicated that students are familiar with the assessment activities of their academic program. Part of the reason that a higher proportion of student responses did not indicate familiarity with assessment activities is that a number of tools used by academic units are transparent to students. Faculty frequently use senior capstone classes, juried design projects or creative works, and embedded course questions for learning assessment. Students typically view these assignments as part of the larger set of course or degree requirements rather than specific tools for assessment.

Self-study survey results from faculty, as well, strongly indicate that a functioning and valued assessment program is in place at UCCS. Nearly all faculty respondents, 92 percent, reported that they understand the importance of assessing student learning and academic programs. Likewise, the vast majority of faculty respondents, 78 percent, reported that they are familiar with the assessment activities of their academic programs. And the majority of faculty respondents, 53 percent, agreed that assessment activities help improve student learning and the quality of their academic programs.

As these results suggest, levels of faculty resistance to undertaking assessment have been replaced by greater acceptance of the assessment process and the benefits offered by these activities. More than half of the academic units on campus have completed a sufficient number of cycles of gathering assessment information, interpreting the findings, and making improvements to realize the tangible benefits associated with and directly received from these efforts. As an increasing number of units reach this point in the next several years, the proportion of faculty who see gains in learning and enhanced program quality also will increase. Time constraints is one reported reason that a higher proportion of faculty did not indicate that assessment is improving learning and academic programs.

The remaining challenges facing the full implementation of learning assessment at the best practices level within all academic programs include the following:

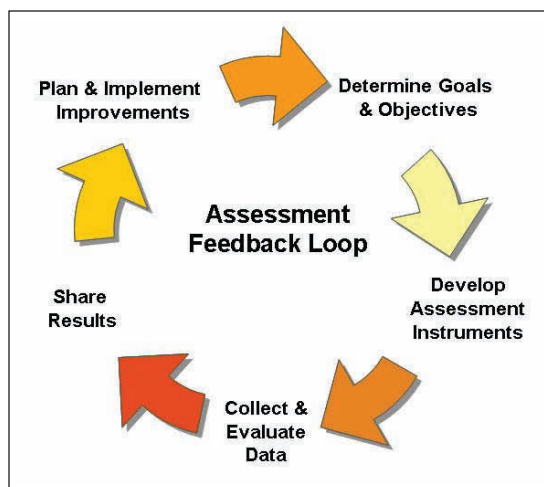
- Providing additional support and recognition for the units that have consistently met or exceeded the institution's expectations
- Providing guidance and consultation to the units that are deficient in meeting the institution's expectations
- Creating incentives for faculty who desire to try innovative assessment projects
- Preparing and delivering faculty development opportunities that address assessment topics, including:
  - Constructing syllabi that facilitate assessment
  - Creating effective rubrics
  - Adapting courses and curricula to address different learning styles
  - Making learning processes more meaningful and useful for students
  - Intervening early with at-risk students
  - Transforming assessment data into meaningful actions in the classroom and at the department level

## Curricular and Program Changes as a Result of Program-Level Assessment

The annual progress report process, in which assessment information is collected, mirrors the typical assessment feedback loop (see Figure 4.1). Each element of the feedback loop is incorporated into the [progress report template](#). During the cycle of assessment, a unit determines objectives, develops instruments to measure those objectives, collects and analyzes data, shares these data with its faculty, recommends and implements improvements, and determines if those improvements were successful while beginning the process once again.

This cycle takes place every year, and at any point a program may be at different stages of this cycle. Certain programs across campus or in the same college may be beginning the cycle such as when new majors or minors are offered, or when data is collected for the very first time; simultaneously, the cycle may have been successfully completed for the second or third time with other programs; or in some unique cases, the entire assessment process is re-evaluated after several iterations. When units plan and implement changes that are intended to improve the assessment process and student learning, they are, in fact, closing the assessment loop, which lays the foundation for ongoing assessment and improvement.

*Figure 4.1 — Assessment Feedback Loop*



During the annual progress report process, respondents from academic units submit a report to the SAAC that contains specific details on each of the assessment areas above. This information is used to (1) evaluate student learning outcomes plus the assessment progress and processes of the program, (2) inform the campus community and its constituents regarding program objectives, instruments utilized, and improvements made based upon assessment, and (3) provide a collection of assessment initiatives and innovations that can be used to improve assessment on campus and shared with other institutions. Over 80 percent of departments have clear procedures in place for faculty involvement in deciding on and implementing improvements. These planned and

implemented improvements are a direct result of the assessment process, and they provide detailed evidence that assessment enhances learning for students, elevates the quality of programs, and increases the effectiveness of departments, colleges, and the university.

It is important to note that the annual progress report process invites faculty into a discussion of their program, the curricula, academic processes within that curricula, and the assessment process as a whole. This discussion often results in improvements that relate directly to their student learning objectives, but are, in some cases, not a direct result of data gathered through planned assessment activities. These improvements are recognized by SAAC to be as likely to improve student learning as those that arise in response to specific data and are, therefore, not only expected, but welcomed as additions to the progress report process. Many of the improvements

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*The annual progress report process invites faculty into a discussion of their program.*

listed below are direct results of collected data, but improvements and appropriate explanations of both sorts are included.

Improvements fall into three main areas: those applied to the curriculum, academic processes, and the assessment process itself (Figure 4.2). The majority, or 60 percent, of improvements at UCCS are curricular improvements; the most involve changes to course content. Improvements from the 2003 – 04 and preceding academic years can be found in their entirety within the appendices of the [SAAC annual reports](#).

*Figure 4.2 — Assessment-Based Improvements*

Curricular	Academic Processes	Assessment Processes
Course Content	Personnel	Objectives
Prerequisites	Advising	Measurement Instruments
Course Sequence	Information Sharing	Data Collection and Analysis
Program Requirements	Technology	Personnel Involvement
Adding/Deleting Courses		

### *Improvements to the Curriculum*

The most frequent area of improvement as a result of assessment is the curriculum. These improvements directly increase student learning through course content revisions, prerequisites or course sequences changes, and course additions or deletions.

#### *Changes in Course Content*

Revisions to course content are the most often noted improvements. They result from data collected and analyzed from course-level assessments, student and alumni surveys, standardized exams, and other tools. References to specific measurement instruments are in italics.

**Health Care Sciences BS (2002 – 03).** The *Program Option Syllabi Survey Review* of core major courses revealed significant overlap in general areas of introductory review. Syllabi and course content for core major courses have been revised, eliminating overlap and allowing greater depth of content area.

**Public Administration MPA (2002 – 03).** The data obtained from *Exit Surveys* and *Advanced Seminars* led to concrete improvements in the advanced seminar experience. The Colorado Springs faculty has worked toward total consistency with the Denver campus in the delivery of this course. Consistency has been achieved in such areas as the use of second readers, involvement of client feedback regarding the final project and product, and use of the exit survey itself.

**Spanish BA (2002 – 03).** Introductory Spanish has traditionally taken four full semesters to cover the textbook content. Based on feedback from *informal course level assessment* and *communication with students*, and with the help of a new, more concise fifth edition, faculty have compressed this coverage to three semesters to allow for literary readings in the fourth semester. This move facilitates greater language ability at the intermediate level.

**Computer Science BS (2003 – 04).** In previous years, the *CS 410 Student Assessment Survey*, which requests student input in three areas of the curriculum that should prepare students for the compiler design course (CS 410), showed that students report they lack adequate knowledge of the C programming language. In 2002, the department developed a new course to remedy this deficiency, and the new survey data indicates that this problem has been resolved.

**History BA (2003 – 04).** The *Thesis Evaluation Form* indicated research skills as a potential area of concern. The department invited the library liaison to the departmental faculty meeting to review the many research aids and bibliographies available to students. This review was valuable, and students currently enrolled in History 499 were given very definite instructions regarding library research.

**Nursing MSN (2003 – 04).** Nurse Practitioner alumni indicated, through the *UCCS Graduate Alumni Survey*, that they would prefer more business content. As a result, content was reviewed and syllabi changed.

**Professional Writing Minor (2003 – 04).** The *English 309 Final Report Rubric* indicated that student performance needed to improve in front and back matter, document design and documentation, and use of sources. Faculty are now emphasizing these criteria more fully in their 309 sections.

**Spanish BA (2004 – 05).** Faculty are reviewing student deficiency data obtained from the *Intermediate Level Language Assessment Exam* to determine weaknesses and reformulate the introductory courses to strengthen Spanish language instruction.

#### *Changes to Prerequisites, Sequence, and Requirements*

Often one improvement takes several forms. By way of illustration, the following examples include improvements to course content, additions and deletions of courses, and alterations to prerequisites, sequencing, or program requirements.

**Spanish BA (2003 – 04).** *Informal student input from FCQs, advising, casual discussions, and class surveys* suggest that stronger methodological knowledge is required for upper-division literary courses. Spanish 310 Literary Analysis has therefore been converted into a required theory-based course for all students proceeding to literature coursework. The goal is to introduce theoretical methodology here instead of during upper-level survey courses, freeing up those courses for more extensive and in-depth literary examinations. This improvement has allowed for more advanced upper-level coursework, and prepared students more effectively for graduate programs.

**Computer Science BS (2004 – 05).** The *CS 410 Student Assessment Survey* and the *Evaluation and Preparation of CS 450 questionnaire* data seem to show that seniors do not have the programming skills that are needed in the senior level courses. The department intends to initiate a sophomore-level assessment and extend the Programming with C course from two to three credits to improve students' programming skills.

**Health Care Sciences BS (2004 – 05).** Curricular revisions are being made in response to feedback from the *Therapeutic Communication Questionnaire* that showed health care science students do not value communication skills as highly as nursing students. It was concluded that Health Sciences students may not be ready for therapeutic communication as they are still formulating their career paths and do not yet realize the need for this skill. For this reason HSCI 200 has been dropped. Therapeutic communication skills will be infused into other classes or will be offered as a stand-alone curriculum for sports health and wellness promotion and nutrition majors. In a like manner, practical opportunities that focus on communication skills will be required earlier in Health Sciences coursework.

#### *Changes in Course Additions and Deletions*

In response to assessment results, courses are often modified in ways that affect other courses and course content. In rarer cases, entirely new courses are developed as a consequence of finalizing assessment results.

**Communication BA (2004 – 05).** A new event planning course was offered in spring 2005 to provide communication majors with more hands-on career preparation. Students proposed, planned, and executed real events sponsored by the Communication Department in partnership with several organizations in the community.

### *Improvements to Academic Processes*

Changes to the academic process can take several forms: increasing or modifying program offerings, enhancing and encouraging the use of technology, making personnel-related changes, implementing new trainings and meetings, or revising advising services or programs. The two most often cited types of improvements are those related to personnel and advising. Personnel-related changes have included hiring new faculty, placing faculty members as coordinators for courses and laboratories, and, in one instance, terminating an instructor.

#### *Personnel Improvement*

The gathering of assessment data has the potential of exposing weak content areas, which can hinder student learning. Choices for ameliorating this weakness include adding content to existing courses, adding additional courses, or adding personnel with specific expertise.

**Computer Science BS (2002 – 03).** The department is pleased with the improved scores on the *ETS Major Field Test*, but feels that the score for *Indicator Two, Computer Organization and Architecture*, should be increased. The course that is most strongly associated with this indicator is CS 420. This course was taught by lecturers in the past because the department did not have an expert in this field among its faculty. A new faculty member, whose field is computer architecture, was hired to teach the course in the spring of 2003.

**Sociology BA (2004 – 05).** The department made two hires in the past year in the area of criminology and justice studies and a joint appointment with women's studies. These new faculty will help address the students' requests identified through the *Sociology Exit Survey* for more courses in criminology, gender, and race.

**English BA (2004 – 05).** Tenure-track faculty have invited student input on new faculty lines for the department through the use of the *English Exit Survey*. Students indicated over a few years that they would like a wider range of literature and greater exposure to different critical methods in the program. As a result, this fall semester the department has put forward a new position proposal for a specialist in 20<sup>th</sup> century American poetry with secondary areas in critical theory and global literature. Besides strengthening offerings in critical theory and diverse global literature, such a faculty addition will fortify offerings in the diverse writers of this period in American literature.

**History BA (2004 – 05).** Past *Senior History Major Surveys* have pointed to an important curricular gap in the area of Middle Eastern and North African history. The department has requested a new hire in this area, and the request has been ranked first by both the LAS Budget and Planning Committee and LAS chairs and directors.

#### *Advising and Information Sharing Improvements*

Changes related to advising and information-sharing have included adding advising sessions, sharing information about useful studying and learning strategies, and providing more information about careers, research, and other opportunities in the discipline.

**Chemistry BA/BS (2003 – 04).** *Diagnostic tests* given at the beginning of each semester showed that students had difficulty remembering basic math skills and logarithms. In addition to modules, new offerings for intensive review and supplemental instruction sessions are available the first few weeks of class to help students acquire these skills.

**Chemistry BA/BS (2003 – 04).** *The tracking of undergraduate presentations* show that the level of student participation in such conferences has increased, and students report that the experiences motivate and prepare them for graduate work. The number of research opportunities has been increased and faculty are recruiting students earlier in their academic careers.

**Communication BA (2003 – 04).** Through informal methods, it was determined that communication majors need to be more informed about career opportunities in the communication field. At the spring 2004 Career Day event held for all UCCS students, a panel of communication professionals discussed their jobs, the skills and abilities needed to do their particular jobs, and the type of job opportunities available in their areas of expertise. After the panel discussion, communication students met in small groups with community professionals to discuss their areas of specialty and obtain answers to their questions.

**Mathematics BA/BS (2003 – 04).** The *Scoring Rubric for Math 431* highlighted the importance of group study and has led to the addition of supplemental instruction sessions.

**Psychology BA (2003 – 04).** Slightly below average scores on the *ETS Major Field Test* and responses to the questions about advising on the Graduating Senior Survey have led the department to improve advising through its revised website and an email distribution list. This allows students to receive more advice about course offerings and sequencing. The website includes a particularly useful advising tool: the FAQ section.

**Public Administration MPA (2004 – 05).** In response to student comments from the *Focus Group Protocol*, where themes such as the need for more electives, resistance to the statistics course, and a need for more comprehensive orientation procedures arose, an additional orientation session was held, which nine students attended.

**Spanish BA (2004 – 05).** Data obtained from the *Language Technology Lab Usage/Success Assessment* show that students who used the center earned higher grades in their language courses than those who did not. This information is being shared widely with students and faculty in the foreign languages curriculum.

#### *Technology Improvements*

Programs have purchased new laboratory equipment (classroom response technology, or clickers), added eCollege to courses, and provided faculty grants to update online courses and enhance the learning environment.

**Business MBA (2003 – 04).** The *MBA Program Evaluation Survey* showed higher scores for team building, but this area is still a concern. To improve team skills, eCompanion was incorporated into on-campus courses, providing virtual meeting rooms for student teams. Subsequently, eight faculty received grants to update distance MBA courses using this latest technology.

**Computer Engineering BS (2003 – 04).** Through the *Laboratory Questionnaire* that is completed by faculty, it was determined that new equipment such as oscilloscopes and function generators would improve the labs and enhance student experiences.

**Chemistry BA/BS (2003 – 04).** *Survey of Clicker Usage* data showed that students think they learn more with clickers; therefore, faculty are using clickers in almost all large enrollment general chemistry and organic chemistry courses. Furthermore, faculty are developing better questions to address the concepts that are difficult for students. Though a SAAC grant, several classrooms in the science building, the engineering building, and Columbine Hall have been outfitted with the technology to use clickers, and two portable units are now available for checkout.

### ***Improvements to the Assessment Process***

Planned and implemented changes to the assessment process do not always appear in the improvements section of the assessment progress report, but they show the thoughtfulness of the faculty as they work to secure useful data. The biology faculty, for instance, created new objectives and instruments during 2005. The results of the changes have not yet been determined. Although this information is evident to SAAC and mentioned elsewhere in the progress report, it was omitted from the improvements section of their report. This redesigning of the assessment process was a pivotal juncture for the Biology Department, and it has the potential to have significant, positive effects on student learning and renewed faculty commitments. A detailed account of the biology faculty initiative is documented in the [2005 SAAC Annual Report](#).

### ***Measurement Instruments***

The most common improvement to the existing assessment process is to revise assessment instruments. By adjusting how objectives are measured, faculty can more accurately determine if those learning objectives are being met and where any potential deficiencies may exist. The close alignment of objectives with measures is an important aspect of these improvements. Clarity and alignment ensure that students are learning the outcomes intended. The following representative examples demonstrate the importance of these correlations:

**Counseling and Human Services MA (2002 – 03).** A lack of quantitative data in the past led Counseling and Human Services to develop two rubrics — the *Qualities of Effective Counselor Skills Rubric* and the *Personal Characteristics Rubric*.

**Nursing BS (2002 – 03).** The *Clinical Evaluation Tool* pilot project identified the need to standardize students' evaluations of clinical facilities. Student Clinical Evaluations have also been revised to be more detailed and succinct. Behaviorally anchored criteria, using a Likert scale, have facilitated better communication between students and clinical faculty.

**Anthropology BA (2003 – 04).** Faculty are redesigning components of the *Diagnostic and Exit Exams* to address more of the foundational concepts and theories in the discipline.

**Computer Science MS (2003 – 04).** The quality of *Thesis, Project Reports, and Presentation Forms* were judged to lack detail, so new forms have been developed, and they will be used this year.

**Special Education Licensure (2003 – 04).** *Telephone interviews of current employers, or professional partners*, were piloted in 2004. The department plans to modify interview questions based on results.

### ***Objectives/Analysis/Data Collection Changes***

Making changes to learning objectives often requires new assessment instruments and procedures for data collection and personnel involvement. Changes of this magnitude show the willingness of faculty to improve student learning and their programs, plus fulfill the university's mission.



**Gerontology Minor (2004 – 05).** Sufficient data have not yet been collected (*Pre-Test/Post-Test, Portfolio*) to begin program improvements, but recent reviews demonstrated that more adequate data will be needed, so the data collection plan was altered. The new and improved data collection process will provide more centrally located data.

**Health Care Sciences BS (2004 – 05).** While 100 percent of the students are at a satisfactory level of proficiency, as measured by the *Practicum Evaluation Tool*, neither the faculty, internship supervisors, nor students using the tool perceived that it measured either what was intended or needed. Hence, a new tool is planned for the spring of 2006. Now, the department will also track the number of students who complete internships each year, summarize their scores, and note where improvement is necessary. The department will also compare how scores relate to previous years and consider using a benchmark score.

**Mathematics BA/BS (2004 – 05).** *Graduating Senior Survey* data indicates that UCCS prepared the respondents well for their field of specialization, a finding that the department has deemed an important student learning outcome. An objective regarding the integration of learning in a comprehensive way (employment/further graduate study) was added.

**Philosophy BA (2004 – 05).** The lack of submitted *Senior Thesis Written and Oral Evaluation Forms* led the department to streamline the collection of assessment material.

**Political Science BA (2004 – 05).** The department revised assessment efforts overall and will revise objectives, map courses to these objectives, develop a course mapping matrix, and develop and administer an exit survey.

**Special Education Licensure (2004 – 05).** The department is redesigning *Student Teaching Competencies* and related measures to capture the skills required of a special education generalist.

UCCS faculty members are committed to assessing student learning outcomes and designing and implementing improvements based upon assessment results. These commitments are evidenced by their involvement in the assessment process and the thoughtful improvements made to enrich student learning and institutional quality. The needs and preferences of students — collected through surveys, capstone courses, and other means — are often catalysts for this process.

*Core Component 3c. The organization creates effective learning environments.*

## Faculty Commitment to Learning

### Commitment to Classroom Teaching and Innovation

Based on the responses of 147 faculty who completed a faculty survey in fall 2005, a commitment to effective teaching and innovation in the classroom is evidenced across the university. To sum up, a vast majority (80 percent) of faculty agree or strongly agree with the university's mission and core values.

Quality teaching is clearly a core value for UCCS faculty since 86 percent of faculty agree or strongly agree that "teaching in a classroom setting is an essential part of who I am professionally." Faculty believe teaching is critical to their professional lives, and 92 percent of them agree or strongly agree

that good teaching means understanding and trying new pedagogical approaches. Almost 70 percent of faculty surveyed agree or strongly agree that the environment within their college is supportive of such innovation and change. And a majority of faculty (72 percent) agree or strongly agree that the learning environment at UCCS is inclusive and supportive of all learners. Finally, the vast majority of faculty (88 percent) surveyed disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the teaching at UCCS is less effective in promoting student learning than it is on similar campuses. Collectively, the survey data suggest that UCCS faculty strongly support and are actively engaged in promoting the core values and mission of this institution in providing teaching excellence and classroom innovation to prepare students for the unique challenges they will face in the future.

## **Commitment to Providing Learning Opportunities beyond the Classroom**

UCCS has a long tradition of high faculty availability for student interaction in conducting research and creative work. Most faculty (81 percent) agree or strongly agree that “interacting with students outside of the class is important to me as a teacher.” Over half (54 percent) agree or strongly agree that “the faculty at UCCS do a good job of getting students involved in research, scholarly, and creative activities.”

Given the relatively small number of graduate students on campus, many of the day-to-day laboratory research tasks are done by undergraduates. Often this work is done as hourly or work-study jobs, but just as often it is done by students on an independent study basis. In 2005 – 06, 11.5 percent of UCCS students were enrolled in independent study or thesis research.

The traditional laboratory sciences — biology, chemistry, and physics — all involve undergraduates in ongoing research projects and encourage, or require, attendance at departmental research symposia. Similarly, the field sciences — archaeology, ecology, geography, and geology — offer intensive field classes during which students and instructors work together off campus for days or weeks at a time. The informal interaction during these labs and field classes is more effective pedagogically than formal presentations. In some cases, undergraduate laboratory and field experiences lead to co-authorship of academic papers. More importantly, for many students such intense participation in active research is a life-changing experience. The humanities and social sciences all provide comparable opportunities, from participating in local film festivals and arranging for poetry readings to assisting instructors in introductory courses. Many departments support chapters of discipline – specific honor societies, such as the international English honor society, Sigma Tau Delta Alpha Iota Chapter.

The local culture of UCCS is one in which informal interaction between students and faculty is valued and encouraged. When on campus, most faculty leave their office doors open, even outside of formal office hours. Many departments have informal spaces — labs, lounges, departmental classrooms — where students and faculty congregate. Indeed, in the renovation plan for Dwire Hall, COB specifically requested an arrangement of space that would facilitate informal interaction between faculty and students. The most consistent complaint that faculty have made about Columbine Hall is that the architectural plan did not include such spaces in the office wing.

## **Faculty Commitments Resulting in a Richer Learning Environment**

The general education program at UCCS is designed to enhance multiple aspects of student learning and growth, including intellectual, personal, and ethical development. Faculty overwhelmingly agree that the general education program is meeting these goals. Approximately 78 percent report that their college general education program is advancing the intellectual development of individual students. Well over half (64 percent) believe that the general education requirements are advancing the personal

development of individual students. More than half (53 percent) of the faculty believe that the general education program is enhancing the ethical development of the students. Lastly, almost two thirds (64 percent) of the faculty report that general education requirements help students become lifelong learners able to adapt to an ever-changing environment. Based on these responses, it is clear that a majority of faculty believe that the general education program at UCCS provides a rich learning environment for students that enhances their development in multiple ways.

## College Activities for Creating a Richer Learning Environment

### College of Business and Administration

In 2002, COB adopted a learning lab theme to provide a place where students may apply what they have learned in class. Learning labs take on a variety of forms. Case discussions, computer simulations, full-fledged projects, and a wide variety of internships make up a sampling of learning labs.

The Center for Entrepreneurship offers a unique student learning environment for COB students. It provides a meeting place outside the classroom where students can meet, socialize, and work on group projects identified by the center. Two student groups — Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), a national entrepreneurship organization, and Delta Sigma Pi — have allocated space in the center. The Entrepreneur in Residence also spends extensive time talking to and working with students. And the projects brought in by the center provide real-world activities to which the students can apply content such as business plans, finance education workshops, and precollegiate classes. Thus, the center provides an excellent learning environment that complements the traditional classroom.

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*The Center for Entrepreneurship offers a unique learning environment.*

Another learning environment that enriches the experience of COB students is the professional golf management program. During the four-and-a-half-year program, each student participates in separate three, six, and nine-month internships at golf courses around the country. The program also maintains — among others — the swing and golf club repair teaching labs.

Students in the American Advertising Federation participate in the National Student Advertising Competition where advertising agencies seek out new talent. Students work with a national case sponsor such as Yahoo!, Toyota, and Bank of America in creating an integrated marketing campaign. Student teams compete regionally and nationally.

In addition, COB maintains a placement service for students interested in internships. Students may seek out their own internship or look to the college for assistance. Each internship proposal is reviewed by the appropriate faculty member to ensure that the work meets academic standards and that monitoring and performance appraisal measures are in place.

Besides these specific programs, the COB has also invested in hardware and infrastructure to support innovative learning environments. More particularly, all classrooms used by COB have Internet access and LCD projectors. Numerous courses also include field trips, guest speakers, and field projects.

## College of Education

COE's vision is to be the college of education for the twenty-first century. To that end, the college has envisioned a richer learning experience for COE students and, indirectly, for their current and future

### *COE sponsored a Culturally Responsive Teaching Symposium.*

public school students. Typical COE students are white females currently teaching in K – 12 public schools in the Pikes Peak area. However, their students are more culturally and linguistically diverse. During the 2005 – 06 academic year, the college designed a curriculum transformation plan to infuse culturally responsive teaching and counseling practices in all COE classes. The transformation plan also enriches the learning experience of students by providing professional development to students both on and off campus and promoting collaboration between faculty and students on research and curriculum design.

### *Professional Development for Students*

COE provides scholarships for students to attend conferences that will help them become effective teachers of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Also, during the 2005 – 06 academic year, the COE sponsored a Culturally Responsive Teaching and Counseling Symposium at UCCS. The free symposium featured national speakers and was attended by COE students, Pre-K (PK) – 16 teachers, counselors, administrators, and members of the Pikes Peak community. In addition, the college sponsors an annual conference where students can interact with educational scholars and be better prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse public school students.

### *Faculty and Student Collaborations*

During the 2005 – 2006 academic year, in collaboration with the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) and Farmers Insurance Group, COE professors and students developed a national curriculum entitled “Freedom’s Song: 100 Years of African American Struggle and Triumph.” This was the first national curriculum generated at UCCS. It was presented locally, nationally, and regionally by faculty. The college will continue to provide innovative, collaborative experiences for students and faculty to promote best teaching and learning practices in a collaborative environment.

## College of Engineering and Applied Science

EAS is committed to providing a rich learning environment for its students. The following section describes the college's efforts in this arena through new first-year courses, help centers, and team-oriented design courses.

### *New First-Year Courses*

Recent improvements to the learning environment for the college's students include the addition of new first-year courses. Engineering and computer science curricula tend to be front loaded with substantial content that is not always clearly connected to the students' curricular destination. New supporting material courses have been added to provide a context for the students' chosen curriculum, giving them insights into their educational destination and the role that support material courses play

in helping students reach that destination. Indeed, the success of these classes is propagating to other courses in the college curricula.

### ***Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Help Centers***

In addition to the campus-wide Excel Centers, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Help Centers, staffed by student tutors who have successfully completed the same course content, are available to EAS students. The academic benefit of the help centers is likely as great for the tutors as it is for the students seeking help. The help centers also provide a congregating area for students in the college's programs. All of these elements make the college's help centers a significant enrichment to the learning environment for its students.

### ***Team-Oriented Design Courses***

Each of the college's programs recognizes the significant enrichment to the learning environment provided by team-oriented design experiences. These experiences typically occur toward the end of the various curricula after the support material courses have been completed, bringing together the various threads of the curriculum and providing students an opportunity to put to use what they have learned. The team-oriented aspect of these experiences allows students to learn how to communicate ideas effectively, listen to others, and work toward a common goal.

These experiences also prepare students for their future professional roles. Typically in the academic experience, students are provided what they need to solve an assigned problem, and there is often a "correct" solution. In the professional arena, however, problems tend to be less defined and have multiple solutions. Addressing these types of problems requires a shift in the mindset for most students, and giving them opportunities to address such problems prior to graduation prepares them for the complexities they are likely to face in their professional careers.

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*Each EAS program employs team-oriented design experiences.*

In the engineering programs, industry sponsorship in courses provides additional enhancements to the learning environment. In these courses, local companies bring real problems to the students. The students then work in engineering design teams to address these problems. Working for an external customer provides additional opportunities for the students to experience what their professional careers will entail. Students value opportunities to learn how to put their engineering education to work to solve real problems.

### **College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences**

LAS recognizes that a key component of advancing student learning is to offer a rich learning environment, one that, for students, reaches beyond the classroom, promotes teaching effectiveness for its professors, and continually evaluates its curricular offerings for relevance.

For many years, LAS has recognized the importance of experiential learning and actively promoted pedagogical techniques that emphasize the value of hands-on experience with course material. Many LAS professors involve undergraduates in faculty research projects, providing first-hand experience in the day-to-day challenges of professional scholarship. Numerous service-learning courses and other service opportunities — in the college, on campus, and in the community — offer students chances to take what they learn in the classroom into other settings. In addition, many programs offer internships

to students, allowing them to apply their knowledge and learn in environments outside the classroom. Again, many programs offer field experiences — archaeological digs, foreign language immersion programs, theatre tours, and Model United Nations trips — that provide students with hands-on learning that develops expertise.

In the last eight years, LAS has added technology to its pedagogical techniques across the curriculum, using smart rooms to improve teaching effectiveness. From online courses and clicker technology to MS PowerPoint presentations, LAS faculty have embraced the benefits offered by improvements in teaching technology. Mini-grants from the TLC and the Committee on Teaching Excellence have

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*LAS actively  
promotes  
hands-on  
experiential  
learning.*

helped LAS faculty bring these innovative technologies into the classroom. In addition, the college now has a suite of 10 lower-division general education courses that have online sections, and more are added each year.

In the last few years, three exciting developments have occurred, and all three enrich the learning environment. First, the college has taken the lead in promoting the Benjamin Brown Scholarship, a system-wide competition for undergraduate and graduate students wishing to live and study overseas. For the first five years of this scholarship's existence, no UCCS student received a Benjamin

Brown Scholarship. In the last three years, however, three UCCS students have done so, most recently, a student traveling to Serbia to study national language policy.

Second, the college has initiated the Scholars Award Program, a competition for undergraduate awards. Each year, the college accepts applications in five scholarship areas — civic, independent, collaborative, international, and interdisciplinary. LAS distributes up to 20 awards valued at \$1,000 each. Winners also receive a medal at graduation.

Third, the college has CSURF, now in its third year. Again, CSURF is a collaborative effort with CC and the USAFA, highlighting undergraduate scholarship on the three campuses. Each of the schools hosts the forum on a rotating basis. Participants present at poster sessions or colloquia. Abstracts of work are published in the CSURF Undergraduate Research Journal, and winners of the Scholars Awards have their articles published in the journal.

The college is currently pursuing a national student exchange that will allow students to study elsewhere for a semester or year. LAS had a site visit from the National Student Exchange (NSE) in the spring of 2006 and plans to place its first students in 2006 – 07. Eventually, LAS expects to expand beyond NSE programs to other foreign exchange programs.

The curriculum in the college undergoes constant scrutiny through its Curriculum and Requirements Committee, and it responds quickly to developing areas of academic interest. In the last eight years, the college has expanded its offerings in ethnic studies and gender studies sixfold and added faculty to these programs. The Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Department has completely overhauled its curriculum and its course structure. It now offers tracks in art history, visual arts, music, theatre, gallery management, and film. The Biology Department has added a sequence of new graduate courses in molecular biology and enriched its offerings in sports physiology. Finally, the Philosophy Department has developed tracks within the major to allow students to specialize in social and political philosophy, philosophy and religion, continental philosophy, or analytic philosophy.

In addition to the last eight years of ongoing adjustments to departmental and programmatic curricula, the college has added minors in sustainable development, pre-law, leadership studies, military science,

and math as a liberal art. Each of these new minors reflects student interest in a particular field of study and increases faculty expertise. The college has also added a master's degree in geography and environmental studies and the only PhD in geropsychology in the Rocky Mountain West. Both graduate programs are responses to student demands. The college has repeatedly revisited its core curriculum and, most recently, added three new categories of classes to the general education requirements in oral communication, cultural diversity, and global awareness.

More remains to be done in the curricular area. The college has taken the lead in developing a campus-wide honors program to aid in recruitment and retention, areas in which LAS wants to improve. The Honors Program incorporates the values of the college and campus, emphasizing a small class size, rigorous instruction, experiential learning, and ambassadorship to the larger community. The program is designed to be particularly attractive to highly qualified students from historically underrepresented populations.

In all of these endeavors to enrich students' learning environments, the college has worked closely with student and faculty governance and campus administration. LAS representatives serve on virtually all campus-level planning committees, in faculty governance, and in the campus community at large. LAS faculty and administrators have historically been leading advocates for improvements to curricula, teaching practices, and classroom experiences.

### **Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences**

Beth-El has emphasized the design of the various program curricula, clinical placements, nonacademic activities, and physical environments to create a rich learning experience for students. University Hall has been structured to allow for extensive student interaction in small study groups, open classrooms, and quality laboratory spaces. These opportunities for students to interact with one another, whether in the open lunch space or a cozy study area, provide the foundation for future practice in a multidisciplinary health care environment. The "Brown Bag" lunches that have been initiated for the accelerated bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) students will be expanded to traditional BSN students, giving them opportunities to chat informally with the department chair about a variety of health care related topics.

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*Beth-El's small clinical groups allow students to learn in some of the finest clinical settings in the country.*

In addition, Beth-El maintains a Wellness Center for nursing and health science students. The open, well-lighted space contains multiple exercise machines, weights, and other equipment to help students maintain healthy lifestyles. The large space is used for yoga and other classes and, when not in use, is open to all students. Besides the Wellness Center, a Healing Room in University Hall is available for students to use at their leisure. The room contains relaxing music, reading materials, massage tables, and other holistic equipment. Because nursing and health science careers can be very stressful, these healing environment strategies are particularly useful in teaching students productive ways of handling their stress.

Beth-El students experience an enhanced learning environment through the various student organizations, college-wide events, and service opportunities available to them. For example, each year the Beth-El Student Nurses Association (BSNA) plans and hosts a career fair. Employers in the region attend the fair, pay a fee to participate, and recruit graduating students. The funds from this event support student activities that promote leadership, service opportunities, social interaction, and personal

growth. One such activity is the annual Research Conference, sponsored by the Sigma Theta Tau Honor Society of Beth-El. Undergraduates attending the conference receive valuable mentoring from graduate students who present at the conference.

For courses offered within the college, small clinical groups allow students to have a close, professional relationship with faculty and preceptors during the learning process. These small group experiences take place in some of the finest clinical settings in the country. The use of technology — sophisticated video transmission equipment, human patient simulation laboratories, eCompanion supplements to learning, and overall extensive use of teaching with technology — within the college also contributes to a rich learning environment,

## Graduate School of Public Affairs

The vast majority of GSPA students work full time in the public or nonprofit sectors. Therefore, GSPA must create learning environments that are meaningful for adult learners who have potentially demanding professional careers on top of their graduate study coursework. Classes are enriched by the vast experiences of the students, who include nonprofit managers and executives, senior managers from city and county government, and other community leaders.

Because the program serves working adults, classes are offered in the evening and in weekend-intensive formats. Students also have access to online classes offered through GSPA at CU-Denver.

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*GSPA partners with the Center for Homeland Security to offer a graduate certificate in Homeland Defense.*

GSPA currently has two tenured full professors and an associate dean who teach both core classes and electives. In addition to core faculty, GSPA employs lecturers from the local community to teach specific classes. Generally recognized as leading practitioners in their fields, these individuals bring a wealth of experience and an understanding of how to bridge theory and practice. For instance, a vice president of the El Pomar Foundation has taught the seminar in nonprofit management, and the former mayor of Colorado Springs has taught for GSPA, as have the city manager and chief of police. In addition to learning from these individuals, students establish long-lasting networks with these community expert leaders.

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor and instructed in the admission letter to make an initial advising appointment. Students are encouraged to visit their advisor throughout the program, particularly before or when problems arise.

Students with less than one year of management experience are required to complete an internship in a public or nonprofit organization. Although the majority of GSPA's students are working professionals whose experience far exceeds this minimum requirement, for those students who need field experience, the internship provides valuable experience and meaningful networking opportunities.

The advanced seminar, informally known as the capstone course, provides students opportunities to draw upon all their learning and integrate selected elements into projects — either research papers suitable for publication in academic journals or client-centered projects. Most students choose the latter, using their knowledge and skills to create a product of significance and utility for a community organization.

A student survey is conducted every two years. The following data from spring 2004 present a picture of student satisfaction with GSPA and its learning environments. With regard to academic counseling from a faculty advisor, 90 percent strongly agree or agree that the advising was responsive to their



needs, and 88 percent strongly agree or agree that they were satisfied with advice they received. In the same categories on academic counseling and career counseling from GSPA staff, students expressed 100 percent satisfaction (a combination of strongly agree and agree). Similar percentages of students found the curriculum very beneficial or beneficial. Overall, 77 percent of respondents were very satisfied with their GSPA education, and 23 percent were somewhat satisfied.

One of the most significant changes over the past several years to GSPA's ability to create a rich learning environment is the enhanced, increased use of technology. The TLC has provided excellent support in helping GSPA's faculty learn how to maximize smart classroom technology. In concert with GSPA Denver, the entire master's degree can be completed online. Every core class is offered online each fall and spring semester, enabling students to plan their schedules and complete the program in a timely way.

Another change is GSPA's partnership with the Center for Homeland Security (CHS) on campus. GSPA is the host for a graduate certificate in homeland defense, which is available through classes on campus, at Peterson Air Force Base, and online. Also, in response to community input, GSPA is increasing its nonprofit offerings. In response to student input, GSPA has reinstated its advanced seminar orientation and is exploring ways to increase mentoring for students in the program. Lastly, the joint Master's in Public Administration (MPA) Committee provides faculty an opportunity to work together to study both the MPA core and student learning objectives to examine how they can be improved.

## Campus Commitments to Learning

### Integration of Teaching and Learning within Institutional Planning

Maximizing student learning through effective teaching rests at the center of the institution's publicly stated core values. On a campus dedicated to student learning and teaching effectiveness, the [Seven-Year-Growth Plan](#) (2005 – 2012) calls for UCCS to maintain the features that attract a growing number of students while recognizing the pressures to increase enrollment growth. To accommodate, the Seven-Year Growth Plan seeks the addition of 42 tenured and tenure-track positions to guard against a de facto dilution of the campus vision. The strategic direction to bring in large numbers of new faculty was based on a comparison of the instructional profile of UCCS with that of peer universities. This direction was also fashioned, in part, from the following assessment findings about the following:

- Mix of teaching faculty
- Frequency of contact between first-year students and tenured and tenure-track faculty
- Ability to maintain program coherence in the face of growing numbers of part-time faculty
- Value of bringing new knowledge into the classroom by faculty involved in research.

The strategic direction outlined in the Seven-Year Growth Plan was further based upon two planning initiatives: Inventing the Future in 2004 and the Strategic Investment in Long-Term Opportunities (SILO) in 2003. The thematic foundation for these initiatives was based upon the recommendations in the 1997 University Plan for student retention and the first-year experience. These earlier efforts examined detailed information concerning student retention patterns, the engagement levels of first-year students, and the mixture of faculty who taught first-year courses. Based on the evidence, both planning groups recommended increasing faculty contact with first-year students, rewarding faculty who teach introductory courses, and increasing the number of tenure-track and award-winning faculty

who teach first-year courses. The Seven-Year Growth Plan intends to address the previous recommendations at least in a small way by dramatically increasing the number of tenured and tenure-track positions and deploying more resources to the undergraduate program.

## **Student Retention Efforts**

Student retention is an important measure of the learning environment and of student success. The Office of Student Retention (OSR) was established in 2005 with the goal of increasing retention of first-year and transfer students. The OSR works closely with Academic Affairs, SSC, the Office of Student Multicultural Affairs, the Office of Campus Activities (OCA), and the Counseling office to improve the learning environment for all students. Furthermore, OSR has developed specific programming to address the needs of groups of students identified as being particularly at risk for attrition — i.e. commuter students, students who have not declared a major, ethnic minority students, students admitted with lower index scores, and students who do not enroll in Freshman Seminar (ID101).

OSR programs are designed to provide personalized, individualized campus experiences for new students, engage at-risk students in the campus culture, and provide academic and personal support within a rich learning environment. What follows are brief descriptions of representative programs developed to accomplish these goals.

### *LIONS Peer Mentoring Program*

The LIONS (Leaders Influencing Our New Students) Program was developed to help students acclimate to college life. LIONS peer mentors are paired with new freshmen and transfer students based upon common interests and majors. Mentors make regular contact with new students during the fall and spring semesters and work with faculty and staff on various campus activities. Mentors work with Student Success advisors to offer workshops for students who have not declared a major. In addition, the office has created a transfer student liaison position, staffed by a work-study student.

### *Faculty Involvement*

During the fall semester, the OSR collaborated to host receptions for new students and their parents. To help acquaint students with campus administrators, the OSR hosted a Lunch in the Lodge program with the chancellor, vice chancellors, and deans, and a Take a Faculty to Lunch program was adopted, whereby faculty can interact with students in the Lodge dining hall. Faculty also worked with housing students on various projects and activities.

### *Academic Interactions*

Many faculty and staff volunteer to serve as academic advisors during orientation, where they play a critical role helping students register for appropriate courses. Certain courses have been identified as having high failure and/or high dropout rates, and the OSR works closely with departments to analyze the extent and underlying reason for the problems. Solutions have resulted in the redesign of diagnostic assessment tests, supplemental tutoring in the Housing Village, peer tutoring for chemistry courses, and an early alert system to notify advisors of potential problems early in the semester. An Engineering Task Force has been assembled to revise existing curricula to help students succeed. Summer bridge workshops were offered for new freshmen taking high-risk nursing courses in mathematics, chemistry, and anatomy.

### *Academic Fitness*

The academic fitness course (ID 111) was developed collaboratively by the freshman seminar coordinator, the OSR director, and faculty in COE for those freshmen on academic probation after their first

semester. The course was designed as a requirement for LAS freshmen but is open to other students, mainly those on probation or those who choose to improve their GPA. Each freshman in ID 111 has a graduate student “academic coach” with whom he or she checks in every other week for an informal one-on-one progress report. On alternate weeks, all students in a section (limited to 10) meet for a class session to address basic study skills. Graduate student “coaches” receive internship credit, and they are supervised by faculty from the COE graduate program in counseling. Because participating faculty donate their time to the program, the course requires virtually no funding from the university. In spring 2006, this pilot course reached its final year of provisional status, as voted on by LAS. As a follow-up, the course will now undergo extensive statistical scrutiny and, if evidence warrants, be presented to the faculty for a continuance vote.

## Merit-Based Scholarships and Recognition

The Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment does outreach in Colorado to let students and their parents know about opportunities made available by the federal government, the state, private donors, and the university to assist them in financing their education at UCCS. Resources permitting, the office also does selected outreach outside of Colorado and produces a publication with information on financing to nonresident students.

Students are employed on and off campus through the services of the Student Employment office. The office also assists the chancellor and vice chancellor for student success in scholarship development by staying in contact with scholarship donors. The scholarship application process for institutional scholarships allows students to apply online. In addition, the office posts relevant outside private scholarships to the Student Employment website and emails application information to eligible students. All institutional scholarships are awarded in compliance with standard accounting practices, donor requirements, and those of various government and reporting agencies. Not surprisingly, the office also undergoes yearly audits and program reviews.

The first of the UCCS 2010 Goals is to grow responsibly in order to meet the needs of the students, community, and state. Listed under possible strategies to meet this goal is expanding scholarship opportunities. Figure 4.3 is a summary of merit scholarships between 1995 – 96 and 2004 – 05. Institutional merit scholarships (excluding state and federal merit funds) have increased 1,248 percent, while the headcount of students at UCCS has increased 22 percent. In the past 10 years, the number of merit scholarship recipients has increased 645 percent, and the average award increased 175 percent.

*Figure 4.3 — Ten Year Summary of Merit Scholarships Distributed at UCCS*

Fiscal Year	Awards	Students	Total Awarded
1995 – 1996	191	185	\$210,675.00
1996 – 1997	305	279	\$308,357.50
1997 – 1998	553	506	\$688,899.50
1998 – 1999	747	600	\$899,352.00
1999 – 2000	806	700	\$1,055,949.90
2000 – 2001	847	720	\$1,203,528.65
2001 – 2002	1,075	905	\$1,471,448.00
2002 – 2003	1,057	872	\$1,414,957.97
2003 – 2004	1,560	1,251	\$2,214,540.28
2004 – 2005	1,494	1,193	\$2,628,998.02
Five Years	6,033	3,675	\$8,933,472.92
Ten Years	8,635	5,152	\$12,096,706.82

The following figure, Figure 4.4, represents merit scholarship recipients and, of those recipients, the ones who graduated or continued enrollment after the year(s) listed. The consistent improvement in the overall retention rate among recipients reflects the rapidly expanding availability of merit scholarships at UCCS and the positive effect of awarding those scholarships.

**Figure 4.4 — Merit Scholarship Retention Rates**

First Year	Number	Graduated	Enrolled	% Graduated	% Enrolled	% Retained
1998 – 1999	449	257	8	57.24	1.78	59.02
1999 – 2000	478	277	16	57.95	3.35	61.30
2000 – 2001	475	281	21	59.16	4.42	63.58
2001 – 2002	669	347	83	51.87	12.41	64.28
2002 – 2003	588	157	228	26.70	38.78	65.48
2003 – 2004	897	238	419	26.53	46.71	73.24
2004 – 2005	747	112	506	14.99	67.74	82.73

Data were collected only through 2004 – 05 and do not reflect graduates in subsequent years. Those future graduates appear as re-enrollees through 2004 – 05. Also, in 2003 – 04, many small scholarships were awarded to Pikes Peak area high school graduates. The following year, however, the amount of each award increased so the number of awards decreased.

In planning for the 2010 goals, the Office of Financial Aid initiated two types of merit scholarships — the Chancellor’s Resident Scholarship and the Chancellor’s Nonresident Scholarship. The Chancellor’s Resident Scholarship is based on a Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) index; that is, receipt is awarded on a matrix of grade point average, rank in class, and academic units of 100 – 120. The Chancellor’s Resident Scholarship targets talented Colorado resident freshmen. A report by IR in 2000 found that the index score was a good predictor of persistence. In addition, IR determined that students in the 100 to 120 index range had a good probability of persistence and, most likely, had fewer competitive offers of merit scholarships from other institutions than did students with an index over 120. In the first year, \$62,500 was awarded to 63 students.

Again, the other targeted scholarship is the Chancellor’s Nonresident Scholarship. One of the objectives of UCCS 2010 Goals is to increase the proportion of out-of-state students, with a possible strategy to target certain regions in recruitment. As a part of this recruitment strategy, UCCS began offering renewable, three-year scholarships of \$2,000 per academic year to meritorious nonresident first-year students. In 2004 – 05, the undergraduate freshman scholarship was increased to \$4,000 per academic year, yet the scholarship remains renewable for three years. The graduate nonresident scholarship increased to \$2,000 per academic year and is renewable for one year.

Several studies since 1995 have clearly indicated the value of renewable, dependable financial support for students seeking college degrees. As a result of these studies and the campus’ own observations, UCCS has steadily increased emphasis upon renewable financial aid, with the ultimate objective of providing aid for four or five years to undergraduate students and two to three years for graduates in degree seeking programs, which would enable them to focus on academics rather than finances. According to the Office of Financial Aid Data Processing, data indicate that the retention rate for both academic groups is approximately 10 percent higher for students who receive multiyear scholarships compared to those receiving single-year scholarships.

The emphasis on renewable financial aid has manifested itself in a financial aid packaging policy that provides similar levels of federal, state and institutional need-based aid to students whose “ability to pay” or Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) remains at essentially the same level throughout their degree-seeking careers.

It has also resulted in broad-based efforts to add or redesign scholarships to provide multiyear financial assistance to students.

As of 2004 – 05, 41 of the 161 active merit-based scholarships are designed to aid undergraduate students through their four- or five-year, degree-seeking effort. Since 2000 – 01, 338 students have taken, or are now taking full advantage of these programs.

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*UCCS has increased emphasis on renewable financial aid.*

## **Academic Advising**

The Student Success Center (SSC) was formed in 1995 to provide more comprehensive and physically centralized services to prospective and current undergraduate students. In 2005, SSC averaged 6,500 contacts with students each month. In addition to academic advising, SSC also includes the campus Career Center, Degree Audit, Articulation Coordination, Orientation, and the Student Success Help Center, thus creating an integrated, comprehensive collection of services designed to support each student’s academic experience. This overarching structure enables SSC to work with students from the time they are accepted to the time they complete their degrees. The director also works with two-year institutions to facilitate the transferability of courses.

Because this campus requires every new student to attend an orientation, SSC is able to guarantee that all incoming students are provided with the information necessary to understand the academic requirements of their programs and register for their first semester. Students receive a degree audit report at orientation, meet with advisors, and get information about other campus resources. This kind of quality control increases the probability that students will receive answers to their questions and know where to find help.

Recognizing that most UCCS students have multiple time commitments and constraints, SSC has made it possible for students to receive assistance in a variety of ways. Because of this accessibility, SSC tends to be the first point of contact for students, whether they have advising-related questions or more general concerns that affect their ability to have a successful learning experience. All the advisors are well integrated with the colleges, sit on admissions committees and undergraduate teams, and have regular communication with faculty. Because of this collaborative environment and the input advisors receive, they have a direct impact on the processes of enrollment management, which in turn improves the campus’ learning and teaching possibilities.

One of the most positive elements of the entire advising process is the degree audit. The audit is fully automated and comprehensive, enabling students to access their information at anytime and from any computer. This flexibility helps students have a sense of ownership over their own progress while providing advisors with a tool that further enhances accurate assistance.

In addition to the degree audit process, SSC has developed a model degree program for every major. Either by visiting SSC or accessing the Web, students can see the courses they need to take each semester to graduate in four years in any particular program. They can also link to the Career Center to access more information about what majors are required for particular careers or see the possible careers for various majors.

In the fall of 2005, SSC instituted required advising for all students. It is too early to assess the impact of this, but advisors worked with numerous students who were either registering for the wrong courses, thinking of changing majors, or facing a host of other issues. SSC also does targeted outreach to undecided students through Freshmen Seminar courses, Majors and Minors Fairs (with full participation from the academic departments), SSC's website, and specialized group advising sessions.

SSC conducts regular surveys of the students using its services, with 86 percent giving their session with an academic advisor the highest rating possible and 0 percent indicating that an advising session was poor. This is quite remarkable given the growth of student enrollment, number of contacts with SSC, and the high student-to-advisor ratio. Between 1995 and 2005, student enrollment increased by 67 percent. From 1997 to 2005, student contacts with the SSC mushroomed by 231 percent. In 1996, SSC had five professional advisors and seven peer advisors; as of 2006, SSC has 8.9 professional advisors and no peer advisors, with a student-to-advisor ratio of approximately 700:1. This is an issue that the campus plans to address within the next few years, but in spite of the heavy workload for SSC, students clearly are very satisfied with the services they receive.

## **Freshman Seminar and Related Programs**

UCCS offers students a nationally recognized first-year seminar program and related academic courses that emphasize student success. In Freshman Seminar, or ID 101, college success skills are infused into student-centered, team-taught, three-credit elective academic seminars with variable content. In fall 2005, ten first-year courses were offered by cross-college teams of three to five faculty, with a variety of thematic themes — among them Life and Death, The Mating Game, The New American Dream, and Crime and Punishment.

In most courses, the topic is examined from a different disciplinary perspective each week, thereby introducing students to various majors and professors. Faculty teams create course content to meet students' personal, academic, and community goals by weaving their own disciplines together and inviting additional faculty to represent other relevant disciplines. In each topical course, students work on four skill sets to enhance college and career success:

- Speaking and listening
- Writing and reading
- Teamwork
- Technology

The course begins two days before other classes during "Preview Daze" and runs for 11 weeks. During the early start-up, ID 101 students receive the faculty's undivided attention, participate in technology training in campus computer labs, go off campus for service-learning trips, and connect with faculty and one another. When the regular term begins, the course meets once a week for three hours in residence hall space. During the first half of each class session, all students in a topic group come together for "common time" (a presentation or activity) in a large room. During the second half, each faculty member and Junior Teaching Assistant work closely with 15 students in a small seminar room.

### ***Program Growth***

In 1991, the Freshman Seminar began with a single section of 16 students. In 1994, when the current director assumed responsibility for the program, 12 sections were offered with a total of 84 students. Beginning in 1996, the Freshman Seminar program has played an integral role in the campus transition

from a purely commuter to a residential campus. Since then, the Freshman Seminar has continued to grow slowly and steadily in accordance with student demand and campus goals. By 2005, the program had grown to 43 sections that serve over 600 students. Since 1996, Freshman Seminar has been awarded \$133,000 in grants.

### ***Faculty Participation and Quality of Teaching, 1997 – 2005***

Since 1997, more than 75 faculty, administrators, and staff co-instructors have participated in the Freshman Seminar program, among them:

- Full, associate, and assistant professors
- Department chairs
- Program directors
- CU's president's teaching scholars
- Fulbright scholars
- Campus and system-wide Teaching with Technology Award winners
- Best Practices in Teaching and Learning Award winners
- College and campus teaching award winners

Freshman Seminar faculty and staff co-instructors are required to attend comprehensive, two to three-day faculty development retreats each year to learn new instructional technologies, innovative teaching methods, and classroom communication strategies that are related to engaging first-year students. Participating faculty have called the Freshman Seminar annual retreat “the best professional development opportunity on campus.” As a result of ongoing faculty training, Freshman Seminar classrooms have become laboratories for student-centered learning.

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*Freshman Seminar students persisted at higher levels and earned better grades.*

### ***Freshman Seminar Assessment***

The Freshman Seminar program underwent a full academic program review in 2003. For the program review, seminar and non-seminar students were compared on a variety of measures. Analysis of the 1998 cohort revealed that seminar students persisted in their college careers at a higher rate than non-seminar students. Further analysis of fall-to-fall retention rates (persistence) for cohorts 1997 to 2001 also revealed higher persistence rates among seminar students when compared to non-seminar students (Figure 4.5).

**Figure 4.5 — A Comparison of Student Persistence  
Freshman Seminar Enrolled vs. Freshman Seminar Non-Enrolled Students**

FALL COHORT	FRESHMAN SEMINAR ENROLLED		FRESHMAN SEMINAR NOT ENROLLED		DIFFERENCE
	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	
1997	65.8		56.8		9.0
1998	70.3		58.9		11.4
1999	66.3		57.9		8.4
2000	67.8		56.7		11.1
2001	71.0	250	54.3	247	16.7
2002	73.3	285	61.9	328	11.4
2003	71.5	328	61.6	284	9.9
2004	70.1	338	62.7	302	7.5

Seminar participants persisted at significantly higher levels in 1999 and 2000 ( $p < .05$ ) and in 2001 and 2002 ( $p < .01$ ), and at the end of the first year, seminar students earned higher GPAs than non-seminar students (2.78 versus 2.66). Seminar students not only persisted at higher levels and earned better grades but also completed more credit hours and graduated at higher rates than their non-seminar counterparts.

The Academic Program Review of the UCCS Freshman Seminar program summarized the program's accomplishments from 1997 to 2003 and resulted in this strong endorsement from external reviewers, Drs. Jean Henscheid and Joe Cuseo:

*UCCS has created a model Freshman Seminar program, thoughtfully and incrementally, that is grounded in the research on student success and institutional transformation. It has met or exceeded its goals for students, faculty, and staff participants and has engaged in formative and summative assessment processes that position it for continuous improvement.*

The Academic Program Review raised the consciousness of the campus, and a recent campuswide retention effort, which came about as a result of Chancellor Pam Shockley-Zalabak's "Inventing the Future" task forces, has brought the Freshman Seminar program to the forefront of campus efforts to attract and retain new students and provide them with personalized, high-quality educational experiences.

## Excel Centers

The UCCS Project Excel program consists of the Language Technology Center (LTC), the Mathematics Learning Center (MLC), the Oral Communication Center, the Science/Health Science Learning Center (SLC), and the Writing Center (WC). These five academic centers provide critical academic and individual support to all university students in all major academic areas in and out of the classroom. The Project Excel Centers provide students both a safety net and opportunities for academic questioning and risk taking.

The centers provide services to students in all the colleges and in most departments. In 2005-06, 39,699 student visits were recorded to the Excel Centers. Many other students participated in workshops, in-class activities run by the centers, and supplemental instruction sessions. Each Excel Center offers students a program of academic support that is based on the principles of collaborative learning,



individualized assistance, and the intelligent use of technology. All five centers are staffed with a full-time director, who guides peer undergraduate and graduate assistants to provide students with the best in peer collaborations and learning. These student assistants provide personal understanding, knowledge based upon classroom experience, academic insight, and patient commitment to others seeking help and advice. The resulting peer tutor-student connection, made possible by their common status, is one that strengthens student confidence, facilitates student understanding, and helps ensure student success.

Other academic support programs in the centers are designed to complement classroom activities in various disciplines and offer individualized assistance to students. These programs are delivered through computer-assisted instruction, self-paced software, multimedia, web-based instructional support, self-study programs, and individual tutorial support. In their respective disciplines, center directors and staff collaborate with faculty to design and deliver specific supplemental instruction for individual classes through workshops and presentations. As a group, the center directors continue to develop new ways to use technology and enhance instructional support while working closely with one another and faculty within their disciplines to refine and improve center programs. Center directors also regularly present at national and regional conferences in their areas of expertise.

The Excel Centers further assist university efforts to increase student recruitment and retention by helping students during freshman orientation with advising and program explanations. Center staff contact all new students as part of the two points of contact program during students' first semester to problem-solve and answer questions. The staff also work closely with the Student Success Initiative to improve the performance and retention of underrepresented students and students with disabilities.

Although the Excel Centers work with students in all phases of their undergraduate and graduate academic careers, the centers are most heavily used by first- and second-year students. In the MLC, 29 percent of users were freshmen and 34 percent were sophomores. In the SLC, 32 percent were freshmen and 28 percent were sophomores. Other centers also work with a large number of freshmen, but provide services to a wide variety of upper-division and graduate students as well. The Writing Center, for example, helps develop the writing skills of first-year students in English composition, Freshman Seminar, and other introductory courses. Tutors also work with sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduate students on projects for upper-division courses. While the Oral Communication Center similarly works with freshmen early in their academic careers to develop communication proficiency, it later works with upper-division students on mock interviews, oral presentations, and so forth.

### ***Center Effectiveness***

Students who take advantage of Excel Center support consistently outperform students who do not. Data from the 2002 – 2003 academic year show that students who used the centers, on average, received higher grades in their classes than those who did not use these free, accessible resources.

Specific examples illustrate the effectiveness of the centers in improving academic performance. Students who took advantage of the support available in the MLC received higher grades than their counterparts who did not, even when those students using MLC had lower entry level math scores than did non-center users. Similarly, students who used SLC earned better grades in their science classes, had higher overall grade point averages, and were retained in their science classes at a higher rate than non-center users. Students who used the Language Technology Center (LTC) earned higher grades in their language classes than those who did not. Even when students had lower entering scores, students who used the Writing Center more than four times over the semester earned comparable or higher GPAs than those who did not. In addition, Writing Center users earned higher average grades in

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*Students who used an Excel Center at least once had higher retention rates than those who did not.*

English 131 (Rhetoric and Writing I) than students who did not visit the center. Finally, Oral Communication Center users have significantly improved public speaking competency in delivery, content, and structure than do non-center users.

Percentages suggest that Excel Center usage has also had a positive impact on retention. First-year students who used an Excel Center at least one time had higher retention than students who did not (70 percent for Excel Center users versus 64 percent for non-center users). Similarly, transfer students were more likely to be retained if they visited at least one Excel Center (71 percent for center users versus 63 percent for non-center users). In addition, center use

appears to increase the probability that students will complete a class successfully, particularly high risk-courses in math and science. Among students who used the MLC at least three times, 91 percent earned an A, B, or C in algebra (Math 104), compared to only 69 percent of students who used the MLC two times or fewer. This difference is evident in all of the lower-division math courses.

The centers' programs appear to help all students learn. Data show that minority students as well as nonminority students are more academically successful when they become regular center users. And although a larger percentage of females than males use center resources, both genders earn higher grades when they are center users.

### ***Program Development***

In addition to the usual student services, the Project Excel Centers offer the following services:

- Drop-in tutoring
- Online tutoring
- Individual and group tutoring sessions
- Supplemental instruction sessions
- Review sessions
- Interactive computer programs
- Videotapes
- Diagnostic testing
- Learning modules
- Videotaped and computer pre-laboratory modules
- Online testing
- Interactive problem-solving sessions
- Language tables
- Writing workshops
- Communication workshop
- Class presentations

The Excel Centers continually develop new programs and activities based on data collection and analysis. For example, the high rate of failure in calculus courses led to the development of supplemental instruction sessions and individual tutoring sessions in the Housing Village. The MLC and SLC directors collaborated to pilot a summer bridge program for incoming freshmen in high-risk courses such as anatomy and physiology. Incoming first-year nursing students worked on math and study skills and were given early exposure to cadavers to aid their transition. Students who participated in this program earned higher grades and had a lower course withdrawal rate than comparable students who did not participate.

Other innovations include the development of the mentoring program in organic chemistry called Leadership In Organic Networking with Students (LIONS). LIONS mentors are an integral part of classroom instruction because they work with professors to provide individualized help in and out of the classroom. Because transfer students often have a difficult time transitioning, an online tutoring program called College Science Experience was developed for both community college and high school minority students. The LTC collaborated with Bates Elementary School to have a student intern work with elementary school students and teachers on foreign languages. This center has also taken a lead in working with study-abroad initiatives.

The vision of the Excel Centers is to provide a supportive, balanced, and creative learning environment involving students, faculty, and staff. Through active learning and peer collaboration, members of the UCCS community connect with one another and develop their unique academic, intellectual, and personal abilities.

## **Campus Life**

Historically, campus activities and organizations have been an integral part of college life. From the beginning, colleges and universities have been concerned about the lives of their students inside and outside classrooms. To this end, campus life functions were created to facilitate student development and well-being. Campus life functions have been and are considered in the planning of even the earliest educational ventures. Experience shows that linking experiences outside the classroom to the basic purposes of higher education aids in the total development of students.

In spring 2000, the vice chancellor for student success recognized the need to restructure the ways in which campus activities were conducted at UCCS. After an extensive review, Campus Life at UCCS was redesigned to provide needed services to students when they are not in class, which complements the educational process and brings together all members of the university community. These needs are met through the efforts of the departments described in this section of the report.

### ***University Center***

The services of the University Center are designed to meet the personal, physical, academic, and professional needs of students, faculty, and staff. In 1999 – 2000 the center was remodeled and expanded from 55,000 square feet to just under 100,000 square feet. The redevelopment coincided with the expansion of the Kraemer Family Library. Today, pedestrian traffic to the building exceeds 40,000 people per year.

The University Center serves as a “One-Stop Shop for All Your Campus Needs.” It houses an Information Center with staff who give helpful directions and guidance to campus visitors from the UCCS community. The center also houses:

- The campus bookstore, the complete source for text and trade books, office supplies, class materials, and training materials for students

- The Student Government Association (SGA) and student organizations offices
- A convenience store
- Several food service options, with a food court, catering service, coffee shop, pub, and vending machines
- Several student lounges
- An art exhibit area
- Meeting rooms for student organizations, university departments, faculty, and the general public
- Space for Intercollegiate Athletics, including a gymnasium, fitness center, and aerobics room
- A credit union branch

### ***Conference Services***

Beginning in the summer of 2000, the University Center's Scheduling office began coordinating efforts with the department of Residence Life and Sodexo, the university's contract food service provider, to schedule conferences on campus each summer. The primary purpose of Conference Services is to support the educational mission of the university by offering faculty and staff affordable space and convenient services to bring educational programs to campus during the summer months. Conferencing also serves as a recruiting tool and generates additional revenue that lowers the cost of student housing during the regular semesters. A secondary purpose of conferencing is to meet the needs of the Colorado Springs community for additional conference and bed space. During the summer of 2000, 5,338 bed-nights were rented to conference and camp sponsors with total gross revenue of \$107,587. The summer 2006 season promises to be the best year ever, with the expectation that conferencing will realize a net profit of more than \$200,000.

### ***Campus Recreation***

Campus Recreation and Fitness focuses on the physical development of students. Toward that goal, the number of programs offered has increased dramatically, so intramurals, club sports, open recreation, outdoor adventures, aerobics and fitness events can be enjoyed year round.

In spring 2005, UCCS students voted to assess themselves a fee to build a new recreation center and to use a portion of the funds to improve the intramural soccer field. Construction of the new 52,000 square foot facility began in summer 2006 and is expected to be completed late in the summer of 2007.

### ***UCCS students voted to assess a fee to build a new recreation center.***

The new facility will include greatly expanded aerobics and fitness areas, an outdoor adventure area for trip planning and equipment storage and rental, a bouldering course, two indoor gymnasiums, an indoor pool with four lap lanes and a leisure pool component, a spa, two outdoor patio areas, an indoor walking and running track, and a café.

The newly-opened Mountain Lion Stadium, located at the Four Diamonds Sports Complex, is home to the university's NCAA soccer team. In addition to hosting Mountain Lion soccer games, the stadium provides a venue for intramural soccer and flag football. In fiscal year 2006, fund-raising committed to improving the stadium commenced, and through a combination of diverse funding sources, including donations of time

and materials, auxiliary fund sources, and a unique partnership with the Colorado Springs Christian School and other contributors, the stadium underwent an extensive remodel. Permanent bleachers for 1,200 fans were added along with overflow capability for approximately 4,000 more. Lighting that meets NCAA requirements allows for evening events, and a new Grass-Tex synthetic surface improves safety, reduces maintenance costs, and allows for high volume use. Considered one of the premier soccer facilities in Colorado, the stadium will also host the Colorado Springs Christian School's football and soccer games.

### ***The Scribe***

The university's weekly, 24-page newspaper, *The Scribe*, is a student publication with a circulation of 2,000. It is dedicated to providing the university community with news, information, and a forum for the exchange of ideas. Through the production of *The Scribe* and its website, students gain practical experience in news gathering and dissemination, management, production, advertising, and the business aspects of journalism.

Funded by an allocation of student fees through SGA, advertising, and other entrepreneurial efforts, *The Scribe* operates with editorial independence under the guidance of a university staff advisor. Student staff include an editor-in-chief, assistant editor, staff advisor, copy editor, section editors, ads manager, business manager, layout designers, web designer, distributor, cartoonist, photographers, and reporters. Administratively, *The Scribe* personnel report to the dean of students. *The Scribe* also has an advisory board consisting of the director of university relations, the dean of students, the student government director of finance, the editor, the staff advisor, and two student representatives.

*The Scribe* assists UCCS in fulfilling its mission of student learning by creating an effective learning environment that offers practical training to students who plan to become journalists or seek an introduction to the communications industry. Students gain experience in writing, layout, desktop publishing, editing, and studying First Amendment issues, all elements that provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for entry-level jobs in photo and print journalism.

### ***Residence Life and Housing***

Ten years ago at UCCS, Residence Life and Housing did not exist. Now, the Summit Village's eight residence halls, added to the campus in 1996 – 97, house 600 students. In 2004, the Alpine Village's three apartment buildings began housing another 300 students. Together, these housing units have transformed the campus from a purely commuter campus to a 12 percent residential campus. Residence Life helps the university fulfill its educational mission of student learning and teaching effectiveness, and it creates effective learning environments.

The office of Residence Life and Housing reports to the dean of students. The residence halls hire one resident assistant per floor, who plans educational or social activities throughout the year. In addition, the Residence Hall Association plans events during the semester. Many of the programs are planned collaboratively with the Athletics Department, Office of Campus Activities (OCA), Campus Recreation, Counseling Center, Public Safety Department, and SGA.

Every year since 2000, on-campus students have out-performed their peers in grade point average and retention. Residence Life advances the education of the residential students through at least six program activities each month, including cultural, service learning, and social activities. Housing currently has two theme-based living-learning communities: the Outdoor Recreation floor and the Nursing Living-Learning Community. Residence Life is home to the Freshman Seminar, with all classes taught in Breckenridge seminar rooms.

## ***Student Organizations***

SGA funds student organizations, and Campus Life provides support services. Support services include leadership training, resource materials, and program planning assistance. Campus Life also sponsors an annual recognition program to acknowledge outstanding community service, programming, charitable contributions, and scholarship recipients.

Since 2001, the number of student clubs and organizations on campus has increased from about 50 to approximately 120. Student clubs and organizations are primarily academic and professional in nature. However, honor societies along with social, religious, racial, and ethnic clubs, and political, service, and special interest groups are abundant. Many of these year-round organizations sponsor educational programs that provide experiential learning opportunities for club members. During 2004 – 05, student organizations attended 15 conferences, participated in a minimum of 15 competitions or debates, sponsored more than 20 lectures and workshops, and hosted numerous induction ceremonies.

## ***Campus Activities***

OCA is the official programming department at UCCS and is, therefore, a critical component of Campus Life. The number of concerts, dances, educational films, debates, lectures, talent shows, festivals, and arts, cultural, family, and multicultural programs averages 70 – 80 per year. Approximately 50 percent of the programs have an educational focus and are co-sponsored by an academic department or student organization.

A reorganization of OCA in 2001 led to major improvements in marketing and the quality and diversity of programs. As a result, OCA received the Organization of the Year Award from the Colorado Springs Chapter of the NAACP. Many of the OCA programs are not only educational but also experi-

## ***The Office of Campus Activities received the Organization of the Year Award from the NAACP.***

ential. The learning opportunities for students involved in program planning and production are enormous. In addition, since the programs that OCA sponsors are now student-driven, there has been a 300 percent increase in attendance, which contributes significantly to increasing student retention.

Since 2001, OCA has initiated events that are fast becoming traditions and are important in building alumni support and loyalty to the institution. Some of these events include DisOrientation Week, ROAR Rally, Adopt a Mountain Lion Campaign, UCCS entry in the Colorado Springs Festival of Lights Parade, ROAR Daze, Talent Night, and Get Vocal with the Locals. The office also helps with official university events, including Back to the Bluffs, December graduation reception, and the Senior Breakfast. In addition, OCA staff participate in freshman orientation activities and parent orientation programs.

## **Intercollegiate Athletics**

Intercollegiate athletics are an integral part of the educational experience at UCCS. In 2005 – 06, 180 UCCS students participated in intercollegiate athletics. Men's sports included basketball, cross country, golf, indoor and outdoor track, and soccer. Women's sports included basketball, cross country, indoor and outdoor track, softball, and volleyball.

Intercollegiate athletics is dedicated to providing student athletes support for an excellent academic experience enhanced by the challenges from athletic experiences outside the classroom. The privilege of participating in intercollegiate athletics is intended to enhance the overall educational experience

of the participant. This means that the student athlete is encouraged to achieve the highest level of academic success and complete all course work for a degree.

The academic expectations in the Athletic Department are set high, and students meet them. While student athletes are monitored for class attendance, most athletic programs require the presence of a study table. Most importantly, the NCAA requires that all athletes make progress toward a degree in order to maintain eligibility. One measure of ICA's success in promoting the academic achievement of UCCS athletes is that the spring 2006 grade point average for all athletes in all sports was 3.15, with not one sport having less than a 3.03 average. The cumulative grade point average for all athletes in all sports as of the end of the spring 2006 semester was 3.12.

The NCAA recommends a strong Student Athlete Advisory Council and a Champs Life Skills program to help develop well-rounded student athletes. In this regard, UCCS has made a concerted effort to make the campus an example of how both these programs should function for the benefit of the student athlete and the university. Learning leadership skills, being active in community service, and developing a clear understanding of the mission of athletics at the university are all goals that Intercollegiate Athletics has set. Through the Student Athlete Advisory Council and the Champs Life Skills program, the department continues to make tremendous strides toward achieving these goals.

Along with providing student athletes with a positive learning atmosphere, one of the tasks of intercollegiate sports is to provide a safe environment in which they can participate. To achieve this, UCCS continually strives to provide the best medical service available to student athletes. This includes physician coverage at most venues and at least one certified athletic trainer in attendance. The office has added more certified trainers and will continue to do so until the program reaches an ideal environment for medical services. As the level of competition increases in college, it becomes imperative that student athletes understand both the physical and mental demands of participation in sports. The office is committed to educating and providing the student athlete with this type of overall positive experience.

## **Student Health Center**

UCCS developed a Student Health Center (SHC) in 1996 in conjunction with the initiation of on-campus housing. To guide it in this endeavor, the university sought help from Beth-El College of Nursing (prior to Beth-El's merging with UCCS) and Memorial Hospital, now Memorial Health System. Memorial helped design a framework for the health center and supported it until 1999, when the campus was sufficiently equipped to maintain the center on its own.

The current Health Center is designed to accommodate all students. The center is staffed by a full-time nurse practitioner (who also serves as the director), a part-time family physician who acts as the medical director, and a part-time nurse practitioner. Most patients can be seen by a health professional the same day for an illness or injury, allowing them to receive treatment and return to their classrooms or dorm rooms. The Health Center also arranges the schedule of appointments around class time as much as possible to limit absences from the classroom.

Cost is a big consideration for many students. Health Center services start at \$5.00, with the majority of the visits costing \$10.00. This affordable health care encourages students to pursue treatment that they otherwise could not afford. Also, no student is turned away or refused care for lack of payment on the day of service.

The center works with students on preventative health topics to help them make better choices in a variety of areas. Health promotion topics such as general health, substance use or abuse, smoking cessation, meningitis prevention, sexually transmitted disease prevention, exercise, proper diet and sleep

regimens, and mood and stress management are presented. An understanding of these topics is re-emphasized in the numerous brochures available for free in the waiting room. In support of the campus mission, the staff at the center work hard to make students feel safe and respected.

The center staff work closely with the Counseling Center, Disability Services, Campus Housing, faculty, and staff. The center's personnel are consistently open to assessment and evaluation of outcomes as they relate to student health. The health professionals also are committed to staying current with the most recent research in the health care field and continuing to provide the most up-to-date care possible.

The center strives to create the best learning environment possible by accepting both undergraduate and graduate nursing and health science students into the Student Health Center for learning opportunities. All staff welcome the opportunity to help guide students through their educational experiences. The center's goal is to have a strong relationship with Beth-El and offer teaching opportunities to students in health disciplines. The center is negotiating with the Athletic Department to collaborate in offering nursing and medical services from the clinic and rehabilitation services from area trainers.

## **University Counseling and Testing Center**

The University Counseling and Testing Center (UCTC) makes services available to UCCS students to help them reach their highest academic and social potentials. The UCTC has a full-time staff of one licensed clinical psychologist and a half-time position for a staff therapist. The UCTC provides individual and group therapies, family and couples therapies, workshops, consultations, and outreach activities for all enrolled UCCS students. Additionally, the center provides psychological and standardized testing and exam proctoring. The UCTC provides an internship site for four or more students who are completing the final year of their master's degree in psychology and counseling.

## **Counseling Services**

The UCTC maintains a work-study staff of students who help with clerical and proctoring services. In response to its primary duty, the UCTC provides five days of counseling by appointment each week. Students are assigned to an available counselor and, once assigned, may begin a brief course of therapy designed to give them the skills necessary to adapt to the issues they face and enhance their social and academic performances. During 2004 – 05, 209 clients were seen for a range of 1 to 33 sessions, an increase of 20 percent over 2002 – 03 levels. Sessions are provided at a minimal fee of \$5 to \$10 and are, in some cases, free. The UCTC also provides 24-hour-a-day crisis intervention available 365 days a year for campus inhabitants and residential units.

In 2005, UCTC staff and interns provided 15 free workshops to address study skills, stress management, test anxiety, and time management. The UCTC consults regularly with other on-campus units — the Dean of Students office, Residential Life, Public Safety, Financial Aid, and Student Success — regarding student-related issues.

As a training guide for master's level students in psychology and counseling, the UCTC director supervises four interns who provide counseling and outreach services to student clients in an ongoing mentoring relationship. Each intern carries a caseload of 8 to 10 clients and is responsible for the intake, treatment planning, treatment, and appropriate dismissal of clients outside of completing the requisite paperwork. As a supplement to those duties, work-study staff receive extensive training in crisis management, office procedures, test proctoring, and test scoring, so they are well-suited to proctor tests for the ACT and MAT standardized tests, subject GRE exams, Praxis exam, and Foreign Service written exam.



As part of the UCTC's commitment to enhance the experience of students on the UCCS campus, staff members meet to discuss cultural issues and maintain sensitivity to the diverse student body. Every effort is made to ensure that a culturally sensitive atmosphere is maintained during consultations, workshops, testing, and therapy.

The UCTC is currently involved in an interdisciplinary study of emotional intelligence. The study seeks to quantify issues that hinder or advance the retention of first-year students at UCCS. The center hopes to remove those obstacles beyond the financial and academic realms that may impede students' progress toward graduation.

## **Family Development Center**

Over the past several years, the Family Development Center (FDC) has grown from a small day care facility to a large early learning facility. Its primary function is to provide child care services to students and faculty. It also provides research opportunities for students and faculty interested in child development.

Only nine years ago, the center was housed in a modular building licensed for 30 children, with one full-time teacher on staff. Now the center is housed in an award-winning facility specifically designed to meet the needs of young children. In order to ensure high quality, FDC uses the criteria of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as a guideline and is beginning the process of accreditation through NAEYC. One of the center's goals is to provide a nurturing, literacy-rich, warm environment in which children are free to be themselves and explore the world around them. The center strives to involve young children in experiences that enhance maximum brain development, which improves chances of success in later life.

The FDC's licensed capacity is 142 children. The center has 14 teachers and approximately 35 part-time teaching assistants, all of whom work toward creating a developmentally appropriate environment for the center's young charges and college students. This increased capacity is in line with the university's goal of responsible growth to meet the needs of its students, campus, and community. The center currently offers full- and part-time early learning programs for toddlers and preschoolers, full-day kindergarten with before- and after-school care, and a camp program for school-aged children during the summer months.

The FDC works closely with the community to strengthen partnerships. For instance, the center has worked with area high schools, training students in early childhood education and Parents Challenge to make available quality education for young children of low-income families. It also serves as a training site for UCCS students and works with the Child Care Response Team to increase the success of young children with learning or social difficulties.

In addition to the responsibilities the FDC has to young children, it provides an observation and research site for several university departments, supporting the teaching objectives of campus units such as COE, Beth-El, and the Psychology and Sociology Departments in LAS. The fact that the center is located on campus allows students to have supervised hands-on learning experiences and to experience the impact of their interactions.

### ***FDC Support of Educational Goals***

Educational opportunities for UCCS students at the FDC include the following: creating, administering, and publishing studies in conjunction with the Institutional Research Board; conducting half-day observations using a specific set of criteria; providing training to FDC staff; and working one-on-one

with children to complete specific assignments. All of these independent learning activities take place under the supervision of campus faculty and FDC personnel, so the safety of children and integrity of the center's programs are ensured. As an observation and research site, the FDC allows students to complete assigned tasks with maximum support.

As the campus has grown, the FDC has made substantial efforts to support the university mission. This year the FDC was awarded a four-year \$42,000 a year federal grant, totaling \$168,000, from the Department of Education; the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) grant is specifically intended to assist low-income student parents with child care tuition.

*Core Component 3d. The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.*

## The Kraemer Family Library

The Kraemer Family Library supports student learning and effective teaching by offering services, collections, and facilities that provide students with the information they need for personal development, research, and collaboration. The library's services include reference assistance, circulation of reserve materials, information literacy instruction, workshops, and interlibrary loans. Its collections include over 360,000 print volumes and 21,000 electronic journal titles accessed through a well-designed webpage that attracts over 1.4 million visits a year.

### *The library developed an online library tutorial.*

Instruction in the use of library resources is central to the support of academic programs. The primary goal of the library's instruction program is to provide UCCS students, faculty, and staff with the information literacy skills needed to become self-sufficient in finding, selecting, evaluating, and using information. The library offers many workshops to both students and faculty to address the ever-increasing, ever-changing electronic resources available. For specific courses, faculty are encouraged to request library instructional presentations that focus on resources in the specific discipline

and information on literacy skills for finding, retrieving, analyzing, and using information. In addition to specifically requested presentations, the library offers numerous workshops on particular resource tools. Notably, in 2004, the library developed an online library tutorial entitled Library Instruction Online for Information Literacy (LiONiL), which teaches basic library research skills and provides a mechanism for assessing student learning through pre- and post-tests. The English Department's Writing program formally adopted LiONiL in 2005 as a learning tool after receiving positive results from student assessments gathered during the pilot tests the previous year.

Over the past seven years, the instructional program has grown substantially. The number of sessions taught by librarians from FY 2000 – 01 to FY 2004 – 05 has increased by 87.5 percent, or from 72 sessions to 135 sessions, and the number of students reached has increased 65.9 percent, or from 1,679 students to 2,785 students. The library also provides a lecture program delivered by panels of campus faculty, who speak on topics of current interest. Four display areas highlight current materials of interest from the collection.

The library is central to academic programs. The library's print and electronic collections are focused on supporting the curriculum. The collections are particularly strong in the disciplines of education, communication, business, computer science, and psychology. The library is also a selective federal depository, a depository for state of Colorado documents, and an affiliate data center for U.S. census documents. The Kraemer Family Library also houses and maintains the campus archives.

Over the past nine years, the print journal collection has been reduced by 40 percent, but it has been supplanted by a 750 percent increase in electronic full-text journals. The library's electronic collections meet most of the research needs of students and faculty. Its print collection meets the majority of the needs of those undergraduate disciplines that have been in place for four or more years. On the other hand, the library does not currently meet the needs of new undergraduate or graduate programs or the research needs of graduate students and faculty.

During the same time period, the cost of library materials has increased by a compounded total of 108 percent while the materials budget has received inflationary increases totaling only 32.6 percent. To accommodate for the loss in buying power, the library has undergone four serials cancellation projects totaling \$305,354. However, many of the titles lost to these cancellation projects have become available in full text electronic journal packages. At this time, 27 percent of the \$915,380 budget is used for purchasing books, 43.8 percent for print journals, and 29 percent for electronic packages.

To compensate for collection limitations, the library places a high priority on access to materials, regardless of location and ownership. It participates in joint purchasing activities with other libraries and offers effective and efficient interlibrary loan services. In 1999, the library began participating in Prospector, a patron-initiated electronic request and delivery system for materials held in 20 Colorado academic and public libraries. Interlibrary loan and Prospector services are available online without charge or limit to all faculty, staff, and students.

The library facility, which is open seven days or 90 hours a week, annually attracts over 623,000 visitors who make use of its quiet areas, group rooms, study tables, study carrels, multimedia lab, and computers. The 2001 expansion of the El Pomar Center increased available space from 37,141 square feet to 90,141 square feet and added 18,000 square feet for the Information Technology Department (IT), which houses a digital television studio, three teleconferencing rooms, a machine room, and offices. High tech elements of the expanded library facility include the multimedia lab, the assistive technology lab, information commons, and network connections throughout the library building. The information commons, a joint venture of the library and IT, provides users with a continuum of services and skilled staff consultations in an array of technological options for identifying, retrieving, processing, evaluating, and presenting information.

The new library provides expanded space for future collections. Chiefly, with its existing shelving, the library is able to meet collection growth through 2010. With additional compact shelving it can meet collection growth through 2020. All together, the library has 1,300 study spaces, which includes 934 open seats, 180 computer stations, and 186 seats in 31 group study rooms. Computer stations are located in the open commons, multimedia lab, classroom lab, five group rooms, and assistive technology lab for students with disabilities. Finally, there are 400 network connections throughout the library for students to connect their laptops, and a wireless network is currently being considered.

The library developed and houses an assistive technology lab to support learning, study, and information retrieval for students with disabilities. The lab has state-of-the-art technology, including screen magnification programs and a variety of specialized software such as text-to-speech translation, voice recognition, scan and read, and braille translation. The lab also has three workstations with articulating monitor arms, a braille embosser, and a CCTV; all equipment is on height-adjustable tables. The lab is

staffed with well trained student employees who have intimate knowledgeable about the lab's software and hardware.

## Bookstore and Print Shop

The Bookstore and Print Shop are owned and operated by the university. The Bookstore carries required course materials and offers merchandise sales, retail services, and print and copy services. As self-supporting auxiliary operations, the Bookstore and Print Shop operate within state of Colorado and university fiscal rules while maintaining fiscally viable operations. All expenses associated with the operation of the Bookstore and Print Shop are paid through the revenues they generate. Examples of expenses include cost of goods, personnel and benefits, rent, advertising, travel, and training. Additionally, the Bookstore and Print Shop pay campus administration a 10 percent general administrative recharge (\$108,853 for FY 2005) on all expenses except cost of goods.

### *Events and Activities*

Student employees are highly valued, essential members of the Bookstore and Print Shop. Student staff are tutored in college retailing, marketing, buying and merchandising, accounting, printing, shipping and receiving, and customer service. A commitment to on-the-job student learning opportunities is central to both operations.

Promotional events in the store are diverse, frequent, and celebratory. Events honor cultures from around the world. International Thanksgiving is one example. Other examples include national events that recognize historic activities such as Black History Month and Women's History Month, academic events that encourage creative thinking such as Banned Books Week, and multicultural events that celebrate diversity such as National Coming-Out Day.

Other promotions in the bookstore support the UCCS community specifically. Community-centered promotions include events designed to promote intercollegiate athletics (Spirit Day), the efforts of UCCS staff members (Staff Appreciation Day), UCCS students (Student Appreciation Days), and graduation (specific sales around commencement).

The Bookstore recognizes that UCCS faculty members are an important element in its ability to serve the campus community effectively, so it designed these faculty-only events: faculty appreciation receptions, faculty office visits by Bookstore staff, and special Bookstore hours for faculty to review textbook orders.

In further support of the campus, the Bookstore donates merchandise to campus departments for specific activities and cash for institutional initiatives. Merchandise donations include annual or semester gifts to student clubs and campus departments. Cash donations include \$500 given annually for staff council longevity and service awards, \$4,500 given annually for student scholarships, and \$10 Bookstore gift certificates given to all incoming first-year students that total approximately \$9,500 annually.

## Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) Department at UCCS is composed of Computing Services, Media Services and Telecommunications. Computing Services supports open labs, computer classrooms, multiple software programs, Internet access, and staff, faculty, and student computers (email included).

Media Services support TV and film production courses in the Communication Department, CU-Net distance education classes, video and teleconferencing, satellite down-links, and studio productions. Media Services manages and provides academic programming for the university's local cable TV channel. Telecommunications provides and supports all campus telephones, voicemail, PBX, and audio conferencing.

IT provides leadership and direction to the campus community in the acquisition of technology necessary to improve teaching, learning, research, and management. The director leads the team charged with developing and implementing information technology architecture — appropriate guidelines, standards, and strategic direction — to meet the campus' technology needs. IT is responsible for enhancing information technology to a point that it improves teaching and learning on and off campus.

The director co-chairs the IT Advisory Council (ITAC), which, as a group, assists the campus in providing vision for the use of technology. Consisting of faculty, staff, student and community representatives, the group also works closely with student government to identify new technologies designed to enrich and enhance students' academic successes. Equipment and software identified by ITAC are then purchased through the tech fee paid each semester by students.

IT has 20 staff members who all work in support of the academic and administrative mission of the campus. Many staff members are outstanding, qualified instructors who are actively engaged in teaching software classes to the campus community. Campus individuals or groups may request such workshops by submitting a request form through the IT website. Examples of available workshops include MS PowerPoint, Office, FrontPage and DreamWeaver, PhotoShop, and others. The department provides help desks in three locations — the IT Help Desk in the El Pomar Center, Library Lab Help Desk, and Columbine Hall Tech Support — to assist students, faculty, and staff in all areas of IT technology.

Increasingly, the Web is the campus community's preferred place, or virtual space, through which to access information and to complete work. Students rely on web-based student services and course content; staff use web-based applications to complete a wide range of business and work transactions; faculty access online information and digital content in support of their teaching, research, and creative work. Therefore, Web services at UCCS have expanded to include a student portal, faculty and staff portals, and an alumni portal — all with single sign-on integration. The student portal allows students to register, drop and add classes, review financial aid and billing information, and seek academic advising all online. This portal provides a seamless interface to all university activities, including academic, administrative, and campus events.

As demonstrated by the increased request for courses in smart classrooms, faculty increasingly use the Web for their course work. Professors also use online course software (WebCT and eCollege) to teach courses and provide students with enriching learning experiences. Consolidating student information into one central database, managed by IT, provides better security and better access for the entire campus. IT has integrated and continues to integrate best practices for security, accessibility, functionality, and design in its Web development. As part of this effort, IT recently purchased a Web content management system so that campus units may change the content of their own websites in a timely manner.

UCCS boasts a state-of-the-art, robust network with fiber between all buildings and 100 megabits to all desktops. The UCCS network consists of 55 Cisco switches and routers with a gigabit backbone connecting campus buildings. The campus is connected with other CU campuses via a TCP/IP network over an OC-3 connection. A fiber network which will provide gigabit access to other Front Range institutions is planned for 2006. Wireless access is provided to a limited area of the campus via 12 access points. Hardwired Ethernet ports are preferred, and approximately 700 ports are available in

classroom buildings and the Kraemer Family Library. IT provides 168 56K modems for dialup access to students, staff, and faculty. The network provides access to facilities, the Internet, other universities, corporations, and organizations.

IT maintains approximately 50 Windows 2003, Linux, and Mac OSX servers, providing a rich set of applications that include email; personal Web pages; file storage; portal, courseware, course materials, and administrative data support; databases; conferencing; and video streaming. IT is continually upgrading network servers to provide greater speed, security, and capacity for projected future use. In 2005, email became the official means of university communication; hence, all students are required to have and use a campus email account, but campus email can be forwarded to a user's noncampus email account such as Yahoo!.

IT supports the systems and processes for the Student Information System (SIS), which allows students to enroll and manage their academic career while attending UCCS. The stability of the campus network is vital to the ongoing functionality of the campus. The Bursar's office, Office of Admissions and Records, Office of Financial Aid/Student Employment, and Department of Public Safety are among the other units which depend on the reliability and consistency of the IT network.

IT resources include 43 smart classrooms, eight fully computerized classrooms that each seat a minimum of 24 students, three fully capable videoconferencing and teleconferencing classrooms, and four broadcast-capable rooms with video streaming and downlink capability. All smart classrooms are equipped with a computerized podium that contains a computer with Web access, a ceiling mounted LCD projector, a VCR and DVD video unit, a document camera, and speakers. Each room has a telephone available for immediate access to help desk personnel.

All smart classrooms experience heavy usage during peak hours, Monday – Thursday, and run at 98 percent capacity at those times. Off-peak hours often reflect a 92 percent capacity rate. The number of smart classrooms is expanding, and all new classrooms are being designed as smart classrooms. IT anticipates an increased need for its services as classroom numbers increase. Existing smart classrooms are upgraded every three years with new computers and monitors, and the old systems are refreshed and redistributed across campus to areas that need upgraded systems, such as FDC and ROTC.

All eight fully computerized classrooms have internet access available at each seat, or station, in the room. A fully equipped podium is available for the instructor. Computerized classrooms experience very heavy usage and almost full capacity during peak hours. As stated earlier, usage drops on Fridays in concurrence with a lighter course schedule on campus, but these rooms are still used frequently on Fridays and Saturdays for ad hoc academic and nonacademic programs.

All smart classrooms and computer classrooms are supported by IT Help Desk student employees. The typical response time for technical support is five minutes. In addition to classroom support, student employees deliver media carts to classrooms and troubleshoot problems in the various labs and offices, both in person and by telephone.

Specialized labs include the Assistive Technology Lab and Multimedia Lab. Both labs have been upgraded within the last year to provide state-of-the-art-equipment to users. IT also provides technical support for multiple specialized labs, including, among others, the learning centers, GIS lab, and Beth-El.

Many software packages are available in the labs. The lab image on every system has MS Office Suite, which has Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint software; Macromedia Suite with five programs; SPSS; additional Microsoft programs; and other specialized software programs such as AutoCad, ArcView, GIS, and Adobe Acrobat. Students, faculty, and staff may request individual or group train

ing in order to learn new software programs such as Excel, PowerPoint, Access, PhotoShop, and others.

Media Services manages the campus' state-of-the-art digital studio and editing suites. The studio is a teaching and learning lab for the Communication Department's television and video production students. The studio is equipped with all the following necessary high-end equipment: professional studio cameras, video switcher, teleprompter, character generator board, microphones and accessories, lighting board and lighting grid, studio lights, and audio equipment. On- and off-line digital editing suites with the most current editing software packages available provide support for numerous productions. Most recently the studio has been used to produce a sociological study on the effect of hip-hop music within our culture and a monthly sports magazine for the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. Additional facilities within Media Services include four distance education classrooms, which may be used for the following: originating or receiving international video and teleconferencing, receiving satellite down-linked programs, producing CU-Net distance education classes, and supporting administrative, staff, faculty, and/or student functions. Original programming and distance education classes are offered over a local cable television channel.

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*Media Services manages the campus' state-of-the-art digital studio.*

IT is a support department and, as such, is not in a position to directly observe or evaluate effective learning and teaching. As a result, the department relies on feedback from administrative reports and surveys distributed to students and faculty. These observations indicate that students and faculty are taking full advantage of the resources offered by IT. Based on their input, IT resources are clearly contributing to effective teaching and learning. The department believes universities preserve the past and help create the future. Therefore, IT supports innovations in teaching, research, and service and helps facilitate this successful campus community, located in a rapidly changing and technologically advancing global environment.

## Laboratories

### College of Business and Administration

While few COB classes require formal lab work, many require the use of specific software outside of class. Two COB courses require formal labs: Information-Based Decision Making (INFS 110, 3 credits) and Quantitative Business Statistics (QUAN 201, 3 credits). In these courses, students learn how information systems help different functions of business. Assignments require the use of spreadsheets, databases, presentation and word processing software, as well as basic Internet troubleshooting techniques.

Separate disciplines within COB require students to use topic-specific software outside of the classroom to complete individual and group assignments. Accounting uses Turbo Tax. Marketing uses the Marketing Game and Marketing Pro Plan programs and utilizes the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program in marketing research classes. Operations and Information Systems both use MS Project. Information Systems also uses Visio and MySQL in select classes. Human Resources uses contract costing spreadsheets, and Organization Management uses self-assessment software.

## College of Engineering and Applied Science

Perhaps the most significant enrichment of the learning environment for EAS students is its laboratories. Each of the college's programs uses laboratory experiences expansively to supplement classroom instruction. These laboratory experiences provide an opportunity for applied learning, bringing to life the subject matter presented in the classroom in a way that can be accomplished only by hands-on participation. Laboratories are used in a variety of ways in the college's curricula. In some cases, laboratories support instruction of dedicated laboratory courses; that is, the focus of the course is the laboratory experience gained in that facility. In other cases, laboratories support hands-on reinforcement of course materials. Still other laboratories enrich courses that are otherwise predominantly lecture and discussion driven. The following laboratories support instruction in EAS:

### *EN 138, EN 140, and EN 149 — Computer Science Computer Laboratories*

The Computer Science Department maintains three well equipped laboratories used primarily for undergraduate instruction. Several classes meet in the Software Development Laboratory, which has 27 Dell Windows XP Desktop computers. The Specialized Software Development Laboratory has 10 Dell Windows XP Desktop computers and is mainly used for supplementary instruction for beginning computer science students. The Advanced Computer and UNIX Laboratory has 30 Dell Pentium IV 3.2 GHz Windows XP Desktop computers and 6 LINUX workstations. The department also has a research laboratory with specialized equipment for graphics and computer networking available for graduate instruction.

### *EN 229 and EN 230 — Electronic Systems Laboratory I and II*

The Electronic Systems Laboratory houses the following equipment and supplies for digital and analog design: personal computers networked to the campus and college servers, electronic breadboards, digital oscilloscopes, logic analyzers, function generators, multimeters, power supplies, electronic circuit boards, and parts and supplies. The electronic breadboards, parts, and supplies are used in ECE 1411 and 2411 and Logic Circuits I and II. In courses ECE 3420, ECE 3430, and ECE 3440, students develop the hardware and software needed for a single-board Motorola HC11 microcomputer-based system. The objective is for student groups to design, implement, and test a system. Implementation involves the use of logic analyzers, oscilloscopes, soldering tools, and software tools such as assemblers, linkers, and layout tools. The students in ECE 3230 and ECE 3240 use PSpice and Multisim as the simulation tools in the design process. The laboratory course ECE 4200 focuses on the design of digital systems, using modern programmable devices, including field programmable gate arrays. Student design groups in ECE 4899 also use the equipment and parts available in the laboratory.

### *EN 231 — VLSI Circuit Design Laboratory*

The laboratory houses equipment for VLSI design with SUN Solaris workstations networked to a SUN Solaris Enterprise 250 server. The software available includes Cadence Design System tools suite for VLSI circuit design and the Synopsis tools suite for VLSI circuit synthesis. Additionally, Silvaco tools are available for process simulation. In ECE 4211, ECE 4242, ECE 4320, and ECE 4362, students use laboratory hardware and software to complete VLSI circuit design and synthesis assignments. Students in ECE 4330 use the ATMEL STK500 controller boards to develop hardware and software for embedded systems.

### *EN 233 — ECE PC Laboratory*

The ECE PC laboratory is a personal computer lab networked to the campus and college servers and loaded with the following software: Windows XP, Borland C++ 4.52, LogicWorks, MATLAB, Microsim, MS Visual Studio, Silos 2003, Xilinx ISE 7.2i, and MS Office 2003 Professional.



MATLAB software is used in ECE 3520 for engineering problem-solving methods. The C++ programming environment is used in ECE 1021 to model and test engineering problem solutions. Multisim and Verilog software are used in ECE 1411 and 2411 to design and simulate combinational and sequential logic circuits. Rendezvous is used in ECE 3210 and ECE 3220. Silos III design simulation software and Xilinx ISE 7.2i are used in ECE 4211 and ECE 4362 to design VLSI and FPGA circuits. MS PowerPoint and other visual aid software are used in ECE 4899 to make design project presentations. While the workstations are used in these classes, they are also available to all university students and provide them Internet access.

#### *EN 138 — Software Development Laboratory*

The Software Development Lab is equipped with 27 networked 3.0 GHz Pentium IV-based PCs running Windows XP Professional. Installed software includes Borland J++, Sun JDK, Microsoft Visual Studio Package 6.0 (Visual BASIC, Visual C++, etc.), Visual Studio.net, MS Office XP, PCSpim Simulator, Scheme and Virtual PC.

#### *EN 140 — Specialized Software Development Laboratory*

The Specialized Software Development Lab, used for supplemental instruction, has 10 networked 1.8 GHz Pentium IV-based PCs running Windows XP Professional. Installed software includes the collection used in the Software Development Lab plus MS Visio 2002, MS FrontPage, and a variety of specialized software.

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*Many students  
work with faculty  
in research  
laboratory space.*

#### *EN 149 — Advanced Computing/UNIX Laboratory*

The Advanced Computing/UNIX Lab has 30 networked 3.4 GHz Pentium IV-based PCs running Windows XP Professional. Installed software includes the collection used in the Software Development Lab as well as software that allows students to be connected to UNIX workstations. The lab also has six dual-processor Linux workstations configured for direct and remote access.

#### *EN 134 — Controls Laboratory*

The Controls Laboratory was created through a grant from the National Science Foundation. The purpose of the laboratory is threefold. The first and highest purpose is to allow undergraduate students in the dynamic systems and controls classes to design, build, and test control systems for a wide variety of systems. The second purpose of the lab is to support graduate classes in the dynamic systems and control so that students can test and demonstrate control system designs as well as perform the design, build, and test sequence. The final purpose of the lab is to support graduate and faculty research. Several “test bed” equipment items are available, allowing researchers to verify control system design methods and theories.

#### *UH 318 — MAE Computational Laboratory*

The purpose of the MAE Computational Lab is to provide general computing resources for undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. The primary resources are personal computers with network connections and software and peripherals for printing, plotting, storage, and scanning.

#### *UH 316/301 — Fluids Laboratory*

The Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering Fluids Laboratory is a hands-on educational facility for undergraduate and graduate instruction in fluid mechanics. The lab includes experimental apparatus used by students to reinforce concepts presented in the undergraduate fluid mechanics course as well as in various graduate level fluid mechanics courses. The focus of the laboratory is education, and it is only used for research under special conditions.

*UH 319 — Measurement and Instrumentation Laboratory*

The purpose of the Measurement and Instrumentation Lab is to provide resources for the conduct of MAE 3005 Engineering Measurements Laboratory. This three-hour course provides instruction in the theory and application of mechanical engineering measurements and instrumentation and computer-based data acquisition. Because the laboratory facility is essential to the conduct of this class, a dedicated space is required to supporting only MAE 3005. This lab also serves as a resource for the other laboratory facilities in the department for both research and instructional purposes. The lab centralizes acquisition and maintenance of laboratory instrumentation equipment.

*UH 316 — Thermodynamics and Heat Transfer Laboratory*

The purpose of the Thermodynamics and Heat Transfer Lab is to support the undergraduate and graduate courses in thermodynamics and heat transfer. The laboratory provides students with opportunities to visualize and measure a variety of the phenomena that are presented in the undergraduate and graduate courses in the major. Another objective of the laboratory is to provide support to design courses that can utilize equipment for heat transfer design problems. This facility is also used to support research in the area of heat transfer, offering an opportunity to leverage research dollars to enhance educational opportunities for students.

*UH 302 — MAE Shop Facility*

The purpose of this facility is to provide an advanced fabrication laboratory that supports the mechanical engineering programs. Mills, lathes, and other shop equipment expose students to manufacturing means and methods.

## **College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences**

Laboratory experiences are crucial to student learning in many disciplines. All students receiving degrees from LAS are required to take at least one class in the Natural Sciences that has a laboratory component as part of its general education requirements. Current laboratory facilities are marginal to adequate in meeting students' needs, but construction, scheduled to start in summer 2006, will significantly improve science laboratory facilities on the campus.

Although LAS focuses on laboratories that are dedicated to classes in this section, it is important to recognize that considerable student learning takes place in research laboratories as well. Many undergraduate and graduate students have opportunities to work with faculty in research laboratory space as part of research projects. Other departments, such as physics and biology, use research lab facilities as part of instruction in upper-division laboratory classes.

The following list of classes in Figure 4.6 gives some idea of the types of classes designated as "laboratory" classes in LAS. These cover a wide variety of classes from general introductory labs to very specialized advanced labs. Numbers of sections and class size limits are based on data for the 2005 – 06 academic year. Other courses not listed here may involve work in the laboratory, even though the course is not specifically designated as a lab course. Some courses that are offered in alternate years may not be included on this list.

*Figure 4.6 — Classes Designated as Laboratory Classes*

Course Number	Course Name	Number of Sections Per Year	Enrollment Limit
Biol 106	Modern Biology Lab	8	22
Biol 111	General Biology I Lab	11	24
Biol 116	General Biology II Lab	9	24
Biol/Chem 153	Environmental Science Lab	1	22
Biol 201	Anatomy & Physiology Lab	13	24
Biol 202	Human Anatomy & Physiology Lab	11	24
Biol 203	Microbiology Lab	8	26
Biol 345/545	Anatomy and Exercise Science: Golf	2	30
Biol 361	Vertebrate Embryology Lab	1	24
Biol 384/544	Genetics Lab	1	24
Biol 435/535	Advanced Functional Human Anatomy	1	25
Biol/Chem 486/586	Biochemistry Lab	1	16
Biol 490/590	Pathobiology Lab	1	20
Biol 497	Research Practicum in Immunology	1	5
Chem 101	Introduction to Chemistry Lab	14	22
Chem 102	Introduction to Organic and Biochemistry	11	24
Chem 103	General Chemistry I Lab	23	22
Chem 106	General Chemistry II Lab	13	22
Chem 110	Chemistry in Modern World Lab	1	22
Chem 115	Preparatory Chemistry Lab	2	25
Chem 333	Organic Chemistry I Lab	7	22
Chem 334	Organic Chemistry II Lab	5	22
Chem 340	Organic Chemistry Lab	2	20
Chem 402	Inorganic Chemistry Lab	1	20
Chem 417	Analytical Chemistry Lab	5	12
Chem 420	Practical Instrumental Analysis	1	20
Chem 454	Experimental Physical Chemistry	2	4
Chem 455	Experimental Physical Chemistry	2	8
Comm 225	Intro to Film and Video Lab	2	21
Comm 227	Beginning TV Production Lab	2	20
Comm 310	Directing Studio Performance Lab	1	20
Comm 327	Intermediate Television Production Lab	2	20
Comm 427	Advanced Television Production Lab	1	20
Ensc/PES 162	Solar Energy Lab	1	28
Geol 101	Physical Geology Lab	5	25
Geol 102	Historical Geology Lab	1	25
MS 101	Fund. Concepts of Leadership Lab	1	24
MS 102	Basic Leadership Lab	1	24
MS 201	Advanced Leadership Lab	1	24
MS 202	Tactics and Officership Lab	1	24
MS 301	Fund. Mil. Leadership & Training Lab	1	24
MS 302	Fund. of Mil. Leadership & Training II Lab	1	24
MS 401	Military Staff Functions Lab	1	24
MS 402	Transition to Lieutenant Lab	1	24
PES 109	General Astronomy I Lab	8	24
PES 110	General Astronomy II Lab	7	24
PES 114	Intro Physics Lab	4	24
PES 115	General Physics Lab I	12	24
PES 215	General Physics Lab II	5	24
PES 315	Modern Physics Lab	1	15
PES 317	Instrumentation Lab I	1	20
PES 318	Instrumentation Lab II	1	20
PES 415	Solid State Lab	1	15
Psy 211	Intro Psych Research + Measurement	11	16
Psy 571	Clinical Skills Lab	2	6
Psy 688	Clinical Neuropsych Lab	4	5

While the room structure of science laboratories at UCCS is typical of labs built 15 to 25 years ago, equipment has been updated and there is an increased reliance on computers. Both physics and chemistry have invested in various computer-based sensors for data collection that is not practical to collect by hand. Under a grant from the National Science Foundation, faculty in biology, chemistry, geology and physics have been working with faculty in Special Education and Disability Services to examine ways of making LAS labs more accessible, or barrier-free, for students with physical and visual disabilities.

Communication students have access to an outstanding facility for television production in the El Pomar Center. This facility has been added to the campus since the last NCA visit, and it includes a fully equipped television production facility with machine room, set shop, control room, audio booth, and editing suite.

In addition to the traditional laboratory classes, the arts program has drawing, painting, sculpture, and paper-making studios, as well as theatre rehearsal spaces that provide experiential learning typical of what occurs in traditional laboratories. Many classes make use of the computer laboratories available on the campus.

LAS lab facilities are beginning to feel the impact of the dramatic enrollment increases experienced by the campus. Within the natural sciences, the greatest strain on laboratory facilities is in biology. The Anatomy and Physiology laboratory had 13 sections during fall 2005, which met for 160 minutes each week. With only one laboratory for the 13 sections, this lab was booked for almost 35 hours of class time each week, excluding preparation and clean-up times. Labs were scheduled Monday through Saturday and on several evenings. This allowed the Biology Department to accommodate 293 students in sections of 24 students each and left only a few slots open. LAS is currently managing with its existing facilities, but the construction of a new Science and Engineering Complex starting in summer 2007 is crucial to expanding current laboratory capacity.

## **Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences**

Beth-El has quality laboratory space to deliver the various curricula offered within the college. Five nursing arts laboratories are used for graduate and undergraduate programs. Each unit has four to five stations that consist of acute care hospital-like settings or examination table space similar to that found in a health care office. All laboratories contain state-of-the art equipment for student learning. Usually two students work per station. In addition, the college has a “human patient simulation” laboratory that utilizes high technology simulation to provide laboratory experiences prior to students going to hospitals or other health care agencies for learning.

The health science programs have two laboratories with quality equipment for research and teaching. A new hire in health sciences has been guaranteed \$17,000 for start up funds for proprioception laboratory equipment. Plans are underway to construct a much needed nutrition laboratory. Equipment is available to videotape students practicing skills in the current laboratory, allowing students and faculty to critique their own performances.

## **Clinical Practice Sites**

### **College of Education**

In the Teacher Education Program, teacher candidates are involved in experiential learning at a Professional Development School site for an entire year. Students are placed in 14 schools across six

different school districts. In the fall, elementary candidates spend two days each week and secondary candidates spend three days each week in the school for at least 16 weeks. In the spring semester, all candidates spend 16 weeks student teaching. The following were Professional Development School Sites for 2005 – 06:

### *Elementary School Sites*

Springs Ranch Elementary School (Falcon District 49)  
Remington Elementary School (Falcon District 49)  
Woodmen Hills Elementary School (Falcon District 49)  
Edith Wolford Elementary School (Academy District 20)  
Jordahl Elementary School (Fountain District 8)  
Wildflower Elementary School (Harrison District 2)  
French Elementary School (Widefield District 3)  
Columbia Elementary School (District 11)  
Monroe Elementary School (District 11)  
Wilson Elementary School (District 11)

### *Secondary School Sites*

Jenkins Middle School (District 11)  
Timberview Middle School (Academy District 20)  
Coronado High School (District 11)  
Liberty High School (Academy District 20)

## **Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences**

Beth-El currently has 163 clinical practice site contracts in place and another 31 pending, awaiting legal and administrative approval. These sites include hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, schools, physicians' and nurse practitioners' offices, sports agencies, and a variety of other health care and community health agencies. The learning opportunities available in these agencies are excellent. Professionals from these sites welcome graduate and undergraduate students in nursing and health sciences and collaborate in their education, in part because of the regional and national shortage of health care providers, but mostly because they are excited and challenged by preparing the next generation of professionals. All students at the graduate level are supervised by preceptors that are covered by an assigned faculty member. Undergraduate students are directly supervised by clinical faculty in almost all cases. Students complete an evaluation instrument of the clinical facilities to determine the quality of the experience.

## **College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences**

In the Psychology Department, field experiences for clinical students are selected to match students' skills and interests. The clinical faculty maintain contact with psychologists practicing in the region who are interested in participating in clinical training. Faculty guide students in their practicum site selection and assist them in arranging placements. A wide variety of training sites is available, includ-

ing inpatient, outpatient, neuropsychological assessment, community intervention, health psychology, corrections, and private practice. Students can work with children, young and middle-aged adults, or elderly persons.

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*The CU Aging Center is a community-based non-profit mental health services facility.*

The CU Aging Center, the Psychology Department's training clinic, is a community-based nonprofit mental health services facility. Opened in 1999, the center provides state-of-the-art psychological assessment and treatment services to older persons and their families, trains graduate students in the ethical and competent practice of clinical geropsychology, and conducts research on psychological aging processes. More recently, the center has received grants to collaborate with partner agencies to integrate mental health services into existing service structures. Examples include senior social services, housing, community health clinics, and an in-home services program.

Students within the various programs are fortunate to be having learning experiences in a region with some of the finest clinical practice sites in the country. Sites such as the Olympic Training Center and other sports agencies provide unparalleled experiences for health science students.

## Performance Space

The arts program at UCCS was one of the last of the core areas of a liberal arts college to be developed. Since the last NCA visit, LAS reorganized its arts offerings by gathering them into a single administrative unit, VAPA. This has provided the campus with a more cohesive approach to growing performance space on campus. With the exception of the Gallery of Contemporary Art, almost all of the performance space on campus is new since the last NCA visit.

The theatre program has a new performance space in University Hall. The 50-seat Osborne Theater, dedicated to student productions, is a flexible blackbox theatre with basic lighting instruments, a 50-scene preset light board, and sound equipment. Students produce three or four full productions and a one-act play festival in this space each year. In addition, the students produce one show each year in the Dusty Loo Bon Vivant theatre, also located in University Hall, which houses the campus' professional acting company, TheatreWorks. The Bon Vivant theatre is a state-of-the-art flexible blackbox with seating for up to 300. The theatre replaces the older theatre in Dwire Hall that existed at the time of the last NCA visit.

Music is the most recent of the performing arts subjects to be developed on campus. The University Choir has existed for many years but typically performs in space off campus. Small ensemble performances have taken place in the Gallery of Contemporary Art, the Lodge conference area, or in the University Center theatre, a relatively new facility on campus that seats about 100 in tiered rows that rise from a small stage area. Larger performances have been held in the gymnasium. With the hiring this year of our first tenure-track faculty member in music, VAPA is starting to expand rehearsal and performance space in music. Over the next 18 months, new spaces on the Eagle Rock section of the campus are anticipated to provide room for rehearsals and possible performances. By fall 2006, 1,850 square feet of space in the Eagle Rock modulares were dedicated to music.

The main art gallery on campus is the Gallery of Contemporary Art, which occupies one section of the Science Building. This facility, built in 1981, consists of nearly 6,000 square feet of exhibition,

storage, workshop, and classroom space. The gallery produces about six major exhibitions per year, including faculty and student shows. Additional display space is available on the first floor of the University Center in one of the lounge areas. Works by UCCS students, staff, and faculty have been exhibited in this space, which was renovated several years ago. Over the last year, VAPA has added display cases on the walls of several campus buildings to highlight more student artwork and has rotated exhibits during the academic year.

The Heller Ranch, home of the Heller Center for the Arts and Humanities, is currently being renovated. This facility will provide additional opportunities for small-scale performances in a quiet, retreat-like setting a short distance from the main campus.

The improvements in the college's performance space are part of a long-term plan to develop academic programs in the arts. Since the last NCA visit, LAS has made tremendous progress in providing students with a more coherent academic program and improved space for both practice and performance of VAPA. The arts programs on campus are still quite small, but they are experiencing rewarding growth and recognition.

